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Research in American Popular Music

edited by

Kenneth J. Bindas

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Cover from songsheet "Lonesome Land."
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RESEARCH IN AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC

by Kenneth J. Bindas (Volume Editor)

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Francis P. Conner (Series Editor)

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RESEARCH IN AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC

Kenneth J. Bindas, Editor

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Foreword

The purpose of the *West Georgia College Studies in the Social Sciences* series is to provide a forum for discussion of ideas by outstanding scholars in all the social sicences. This purpose is fulfilled admirably in the present volume, *Research in American Popular Music*, in which Dr. Bindas has brought together perspectives from a number of different disciplines.

The authors, in analyzing the role of music in American popular culture, speak to such concerns as racism, sexism, and violence, and remind us that present problems have their roots in practices of the past.

By bringing together the different insights of anthropology, history, English, broadcasting, and philosophy, Dr. Bindas provides provocative and interesting views of popular music that are both scholarly and timely. This volume continues the tradition of *West Georgia College Studies in the Social Sciences* of encouraging thinking and writing that is on the "cutting edge" of the various social science disciplines. If, as he suggests in his preface, "popular music offers a unique view into the people's beliefs," then this work offers more than just a different view of popular music, it offers a unique perspective on American popular culture.

The next volume in this series, edited by Dr. Jane McCandless, a sociologist, will focus on women's issues.

Francis P. Conner, MSW
Series Editor

PREFACE

On The Importance of Studying American Popular Music

by
Kenneth J. Bindas

This volume offers a collection of original articles from several academic disciplines. The essays also represent an ongoing trend in scholarly research, namely the study of things popular. That scholars from all fields now study popular culture, as this volume testifies, is an indication of the fecundity of popular culture and also the worlds still open for inquiry.

The six essays that follow are only examples of the many types of research scholars are doing in popular culture study. Although this edition focuses on American popular music, the same kinds of studies done here can and have been applied to other people-based cultures.

When Professor Conner suggested that I edit this year's volume, I was in the midst of completing another editing project, an anthology of twenty-nine original essays for Greenwood Press entitled *America's Musical Pulse* (1992). Although the project had all but burned me out, I was still enthused about the many essays I had read, edited, and re-edited. What kept me going through that project and this subsequent volume was the simple fact that I learned much from doing the work. As a historian, generally, most of my contact is with other historians studying culture or music. What *America's Musical Pulse* most showed me is the interdisciplinary nature of my chosen area of study. Scholars from Mass Communication, English, Speech, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, History, and even Nursing wrote for me on that project. I was convinced that this volume of the *Studies in the Social Sciences* should continue that trend. Therefore, as you will see, the articles derive from a wide array of disciplines, from history to philosophy, but are unified in their belief that the study of American popular music is important, if not essential, to our understanding of who we are and have been as a people.

Popular music offers a unique view into the people's beliefs during particular time periods. Although one cannot rely on musical information alone, when combined with traditional scholarly inquiry, a clearer view of the mass people's attitudes, ideas, and fears can often be discerned. Trying to understand the mass-based society is complicated when one uses only standard scholarly investigation, because rarely are the people themselves represented. They are considered subjects, specimens, or quantifiable data, but not as people. The ideas of politicians and other people in positions of power become the documents on which we restructure the past. The majority of people leave no diary, letters, or autobiography behind, and as a result their voices remain hidden to future generations. This process is especially evident among the least empowered of the ethnic and racial groups in America. However, within these outsider communities music often takes a larger, indeed a central role, both in spiritual and secular terms. With industrialization and urbanization, many of these musical legacies became items of consumption, both within and outside the community. As the twentieth-century unfolded, America's popular music became one of the things most identifiable with America. Think about the impact, worldwide, of Jazz, Swing, Country & Western, Blues, or Rock. These genres sell the diversity and energy of the country, and at the same time they outline the history of poverty, racism, and exploitation that is also part of our country's legacy. America's popular music are living documents for scholars and students in all disciplines, for they speak both to who we are and how we came to view ourselves within this system called the United States.

The essays that follow each look at American popular music in a unique way, from an examination of the images of women in Tin Pan Alley in Edward Pessen's contribution, to high school and college-aged attitudes toward heavy metal music in Dennis Phillips' piece. All of the selections detail the variety and scholarly commitment many have to the study of popular music. To further suggest that this type of cross-fertilization is both good and plentiful, one should note that all six of these papers were delivered at the 1991 Popular Culture/American Culture Conference in San Antonio, Texas. I attended many sessions at the conference and then tried to solicit the best of the papers concerning popular music and scholarly inquiry. I believe I have chosen wisely. The authors wish to thank those who attended their sessions at the Conference and those others who helped in their presentation, like Professor

David Horowitz who provided the musical accompaniment on piano for Edward Pessen. We also want to thank those who provided the critical comments that better prepared the papers for publication. I also wish to thank the PCA/ACA for its ability to bring together scholars from so many disciplines and have a good time to boot. The authors themselves deserve my thanks for their patience and speed in returning edited manuscripts. I also wish to thank the West Georgia College Learning Resource Committee for its financial support for my many projects, including the one that took me to the PCA/ACA in the first place. No department can operate long without the help of a superior secretary and her assistants, and I thank Elmira Eidson and her student helpers Felicia Frazier and Krista McCarley. Finally, I wish to thank Zachary and Colin for letting me work on this on nights I should have been playing with them, and Virginia for telling me not to feel so guilty about it.

Two Kinds of Woman In The Tin Pan Alley Song of the 1920s and 1930s

by

Edward Pessen

Of the four to five hundred popular songs written between the two world wars that are called standards because of their enduring appeal both to mass audiences and to jazz musicians, almost nine out of ten were about love — almost invariably romantic heterosexual love.[1] While Tin Pan Alley's best lyricists often invoked the term gay to describe a lover's mood, they used the word in its older sense, to connote merriment or bright cheerfulness. In many of the songs, the love object could be either man or woman. But usually she was clearly a woman.[2] For all the diversity in popular songwriters' approaches to love, many of the songs throw little or no light on what or how the lover or would-be lover feels about women, preoccupied as the songs are with his depth of felling, his joy or despair, his protestations of the enduring if not eternal nature of his love. But in some of the songs these feelings are revealed, even if implicitly, and it is these songs, supplemented by a few songs that while not about love do nevertheless reveal their lyricists' views of women, that are what sociologists would call my group of orientation in the remarks that follow.

No two people will interpret song lyrics or any other evidence similarly. A recent article on the popular songs of the 1930s discerns in them two kinds of women — "goddesses and golddiggers."[3] Perhaps because I am interested in the 1920s and the World War II years as well as the 'depression decade,' my own perceptions are slightly different. I combine these brief periods, because in the world of Tin Pan Alley love songs they are all of a piece.[4] Goddesses and golddiggers there indeed were. But these rubrics do not fully cover the varieties of woman rhapsodized in popular song. It is possible to discern more than a dozen types of woman in the best songs, each differing even if only slightly from all the others. Exigencies of space suggest the wisdom of condensing Tin Pan Alley's women into two contrasting types.

In the phrase of contemporary show business, one might do quite a number on Tin Pan Alley's women, dealing with them as icons and cultural symbols, invoking Freud, Jung, DeSade, Beauvoir, the better and more impressively to flesh out the discussion. Since my modest purpose is to entertain as well as edify, I have chosen to forego so weighty an approach — an approach that could all too easily lapse into pretentiousness. Since I love as well as admire the songs of Tin Pan Alley's golden age, I regard them as lovely and important things in themselves that are most fairly and sensibly treated when they are permitted to speak

or sing for themselves, rather than exploited as point of departure for some commentator's arcane apercus and analyses.

Singing the songs conforms far more closely to their composers' intentions than does merely reading the lyrics. It is also fairer to the quality of the lyrics. Words that seem mindless when spoken, take on a new meaning when sung. Witness the transformation of the third 8-bar segment of Irving Caesar's and Vincent Youmans' "Tea for Two," when it is sung:

> Day will break and you will wake
> and start to bake a sugarcake
> For me to take for all the boys to see

Even when they read well on paper, the true meaning of song lyrics can only be understood when they are put to music. For the melody, whether mournful or gay, shapes the mood of the song. The reader who does not know the melodies of the songs that follow is well advised to learn them. Doing so will enhance his or her emotional state as well as understanding, since these are charming songs.

The most characteristic by far of Tin Pan Alley's women is what used to be called an old-fashioned girl. (The lyricists rarely referred to her as a woman, whatever her age.) Pleasing to men in every respect, she is above all lovely to look at, as Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh describe her in the well known melody by Jerome Kern. Fields, one of the best and the brightest of the lyricists, is here putting herself in the shoes of a man and viewing woman as she evidently thought most men did.

> Lovely to look at
> Delightful to know
> And heaven to kiss
> A combination like this
> Is quite my most impossible dream come true,
> Imagine finding a dream like you.
> Lovely to look at
> It's thrilling to hold you
> Terribly Tight.
> We're together, the moon is new

And oh it's lovely to look at you,
Tonight. [5]

In addition to her beauty, this ideal woman is tender and acquiescent, so much so, that in the song by Mack Gordon and Harry Revel, the man who loves her hopes that she will never change.

Stay as sweet as you are,
don't let a thing ever change you.
Stay as sweet as you are,
don't let a thing rearrange you.
Don't ever lose all the charms you possess,
your tenderness, darling the way you say, "yes".
Stay as sweet as you are
as sweet as you are, you're divine, dear.
Stay as sweet as you are
as sweet as you are, tell me that you're mine, dear.
Young and gay, old and gray,
Near to me or afar,
Night and day I pray
That you'll always stay
As sweet as you are. [6]

The romantic lover who adores the paragon in the next song puts on a show of realism by conceding that she is less than perfect. But as Al Dubin's lyric for this Harry Warren melody shows, her slight imperfections make her all the more loveable.

You may not be an angel, 'cause angel are so few,
But until the day that one comes along
I'll string along with you.
I'm looking for an angel
to sing my love song to you.
But until the day that one comes along,
I'll sing my song for you.
For every little fault that you have,
Say, I've got three or four.
The human little faults you do have

Just make me love you more.
You may not be an angel,
But still I'm sure you'll do.
So, until the day that one comes along,
I'll string along with you. [7]

In the song by Harry Woods, Jimmy Campbell, and Reg Connelly that some might find ironic for its blatant male chauvinism, and other might find dismaying for the same reason, the singer's advice on how to jolly a good woman is, one suspects, revelatory of the attitude of many men. Looked at one way, the lyrics offer tactical advice to men on how, by a few politic phrases and acts, to hold on to a good thing — a devoted and long-suffering woman who has little and puts up with much.

She may be weary, women do get weary
Wearing the same shabby dress.
And when she's weary,
Try a little tenderness.
You know she's waiting
Just anticipating things she may never possess.
While she's without them
Try a little tenderness.
It's not just sentimental
She has her grief and care.
And a word that's soft and gentle
Makes it easier to bear.
You won't regret it, women don't forget it,
Love is their whole happiness.
It's all so easy, try a little tenderness. [8]

A cheerful if ungrammatical treatment of a rightminded woman who, caring only for her man, is happily inexpensive to please and maintain, is found in Gus Kahn's lyrics to Walter Donaldson's tune.

My baby don't care for shows,
My baby don't care for clothes
My baby just cares for me.
My baby don't care for furs and laces,

My baby don't care for hightone places.
My baby don't care for rings
Or other expensive things.
She's sensible as can be.
My baby don't care who knows it,
My baby just cares for me .[9]

In some songs, the lyrics to be sung by a woman register values that the male composer clearly thinks are exemplary. In He's My Guy (1942) by Don Raye and Gene DePaul, the woman lives for one thing and will abjectly but happily acquiesce in her man's mistreatment.

He's my guy, I don't care what he does,
'Cause he's my guy, and I guess he always was,
He's careless about me, I don't think he tries
But once in a while, he'll hug me and smile
And I can see me in his eyes.
Oh, he's my guy, and I know he'll always be.
And I will try to keep him loving me.
However he wants me, I'm his until I die
For nobody knows better than I
That he's my guy.

The lyrics by Sidney Mitchell for Louis Alter's song are sung by a woman who has suffered for evidently having been somewhat spoiled and greedy. But her saving grace is that she has come to her senses, now realizing that she had it coming to her.

You turned the tables on me
And now I'm crying for you.
You turned the tables on me
I can't believe that it's true.
I used to think when you brought
those little presents you bought.
Why hadn't you brought me more?
But now when you come,
I'd welcome anything from
the five and ten cent store.

You used to call me the top.
 You placed me high on a throne.
You let me fall with a drop
 And now I'm out on my own.
But after thinking it over and over,
 I got what was coming to me.
Just like the sting of a bee,
 You turned the tables on me. [10]

The most attractive, the most enthusiastic song about the ideal woman was written by Lorenz (Larry) Hart for Richard Rodgers' melody. Perhaps because Hart himself was so intellectually sophisticated and ahead of his time in his appreciation of a woman who is something much more than a docile piece of fluff, his paean to the 'girl friend' can be sung unembarrassedly in the 1990s as when he first sang it in the 1920s.

Isn't she cute? Isn't she sweet?
 She's gentle and mentally only complete.
She's knockout, she's regal,
 Her beauty's illegal, she's the girl friend.
Take her to dance, take her to tea.
 It's stunning, how cunning this lady can be.
A look at this vision, will cause a collision,
 She's the girl friend.
She is smart, she's refined,
 how can she be real?
She has heart, she has mind,
 hell, the girl's ideal.
Isn't she cute? Isn't she sweet?
 An eyeful you'd die full of pleasure to meet,
In my funny fashion, I'm cursed with a passion
  for the girl friend. [11]

The versatile and knowing Hart also rang changes on the woman that Tin Pan Alley less often wrote about, doubtless because the lyricists found her more disconcerting than her submissive sister. Whether a golddigger or not, this was an independent human being, a woman who

lived not for her man alone, — if, that is, she thought about men at all — who seems to find one man like another.

In "Bewitched" (1941), Hart's woman is ga-ga about a man, but she has no illusions about him; she is selfishly and sensually using, if not exploiting, him to the hilt, solely for her own gratification. No wonder some early critics found Pal Joey's leading lady no less disturbing than its leading man when the show first came out a half-century ago.

She may not be the new woman, but the woman who sings the following song by Hart and Rodgers is an independent, irreverent, free spirit who wouldn't be caught dead living a cliche.

I get too hungry for dinner at eight
I like the theatre but never come late.
I never bother with people I hate,
That's why the lady is a tramp.
I don't like crap games with barons and earls
Won't go to Harlem in ermine and pearls
Won't dish the dirt with the rest of the girls,
That's why the lady is a tramp.
I like the free fresh wind in my hair,
life without care, I'm broke, it's oke.
Hate California, it's cold and it's damp,
That's why the lady is a tramp. [12]

In another song that perhaps throws more light on the much remarked hangups of Hart than on Tin Pan Alley values, the awesome beauty of the woman he loves is troubling to the singer. Evidently beauty that is excessive detracts from rather than enhances the feminine ideal — at least to an insecure male.

You are too beautiful my dear to be true,
And I'm such a fool for beauty.
Fooled by the feeling that because I had found you,
I could have bound you, too.
You are too beautiful for one man alone,
for one lucky fool to be with.
When there are other men with eyes of their own
to see with.

Love does not stand sharing,
not if one cares.
Have you been comparing
my every kiss with theirs?
If, on the other hand, I'm faithful to you,
It's not from a sense of duty.
You are too beautiful and I'm such a fool
for beauty .[13]

I suppose Cole Porter's woman whose heart belongs to daddy is a golddigger of sorts. Certainly she's a flirt — and she may be more than a flirt. For when she sings of not following through when she makes a play for her caddy, she might be referring to her incomplete golf stroke, not going 'all the way', which is how her comment is usually interpreted, or she might possibly mean that she indeed 'does it' (as in Cole's "Let's Do It") but without displaying the signs of affection that she reserves for the man who has her heart. For that matter, 'daddy' may not signify sugar daddy, but only a term of endearment for her chief lover. And what she says "belongs to daddy" may be her bodily charms, in return for expensive favors. Then again, it may indeed be her heart or the organ of affection. You decide.

While tearing off a game of golf,
I may make a play for the caddy.
But when I do, I don't follow through,
'cause my heart belongs to daddy.
If I invite a boy some night
to dine on my fine fin 'n haddle,
I just adore his asking for more
but my heart belongs to daddy.
Yes my heart belongs to daddy
So I simply couldn't be bad
Yes my heart belongs to daddy,
da da da, da da da, da da da
So I want to warn you, laddie
Though I think you're perfectly swell
That my heart belongs to daddy
'cause my daddy he treats it so well .[14]

In "Daddy" (1941) by Bob Troup, an evidently gorgeous young golddigger who ticks off the price-y things she wants 'daddy' to buy her, promises that she will do things that amaze him, in return.

> Hey, daddy! I want a diamond ring, bracelets, every thing,
> Daddy, you oughta get the best for me.
> Hey daddy, gee, won't I look swell in sables, gowns with Paris labels.
> Daddy, you ought get the best for me.
> Here's an amazin' revelation,
> with a bit of stimulation,
> I'd be a great sensation, I'd be your inspiration.
> Daddy, I want a brand new car, champagne, caviar,
> Daddy, daddy, you oughta get the best for me.

Not quite the Tin Pan Alley ideal is the woman who sings the whore's lament composed by Cole Porter.

> Love for sale, appetizing young love for sale.
> Love that's fresh and still unspoiled,
> Love that's only slightly soiled,
> Love for sale.
> Who will try, who would like to sample my supply?
> Who would like to pay the price
> For a trip to paradise?
> Love for sale.
> Let the poets pipe of love in their childish way,
> I know every type of love better far than they.
> If you want the thrill of love, I've been through the mill of love,
> Old love, new love, every love but true love.
> Love for sale, appetizing young love for sale.
> Who would like to try my wares? Follow me right up the stairs,
> Love for sale. [15]

Even more disquieting than the woman who dispenses her 'wares' too freely is she who feels nothing. The elusive and jaded woman who in

"You're Blase" (1931) by Bruce Sievier and M. Ord Hamilton looks for, but can't find excitement or purpose, is frighteningly subversive.

You're deep, just like a chasm,
You've no enthusiasm.
You're tired and uninspired,
You're blase.
Your life is one of leisure
in which you search for pleasure
You're bored when you're adored,
You're blase.
While reaching for the moon and all the stars up in the sky,
You let all the simple things of life just pass you by.
You sleep, the sun is shining,
You wake, it's time for dining.
There's nothing new for you to do,
You're blase.

Let me close with "Sleepy Time Gal" of 1925, which throws interesting light on Tin Pan Alley's sensibilities. In the lyrics written by Joseph Allen and Raymond Egan for the melody by Richard Whiting and Ange Lorenzo, the boy is slightly critical of the girl he evidently dances and fools with until the wee hours—critical because she seems to have too much fun in accompanying him! But he has faith that the better angel in her nature will yet prevail and she will become what she should be after he pops the question and buys her Tin Pan Alley's magic cure for all women's problems - - a cottage.

Sleepy time gal, you're turning night into day.
Sleepy time gal, you've danced the evening away.
Before each silvery star fades out of sight,
Please give me one little kiss,
Then let us whisper good night, It's gettin' late
and dear, your pillow's waitin'
Sleepy Time Gal, when all your dancin' is through,
Sleepy Time Gal, I'll find a cottage for you.
You'll learn to cook and to sew
What's more, you'll love it, I know,

When you're a stay-at-home, play-at-home
8 o'clock sleepy time gal.

The attitudes toward women I have chronicled should not be construed as necessarily those of the average American male. These were the sentiments expressed by inordinately literate and sophisticated men and one woman, albeit sentiments that reflected the values of the time and that represented their bright authors' perceptions of the feelings of most young Americans. There is no reason to doubt that the male chauvinism permeating the lyrics of the popular songs of a half century ago and back were representative of American thought and feeling of the era. For even the lyrics about independent women would hardly be regarded as paeans to womanhood by feminists, whether male or female. The fact, however, that consciousness had not been raised very high in the popular song of a half-century ago and back, while reminding us that the values of male lyricists were not much different from those of the mass audience they serenaded, does not detract from the importance of their poems as clue to the popular mind and, above all, as charming and enduring American haiku that have enriched our musical culture.

Notes

[1] Edward Pessen, "Tin Pan Alley's Many Ways of Love, 1920-1945," *Popular Music and Society*, XIV (December 1990), 37-45.

[2] For a summary of popular songs and their composers, 1892-1970, see ASCAP's Hit Tunes (New York, 1970).

[3] Timothy E. Scheurer, "Goddesses and Golddiggers: Images of Women in Popular Music of the 1930s," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 24 (Summer 1990), 23-38.

[4] See Edward Pessen, "The Great Songwriters of Tin Pan Alley's Golden Age: A Social, Occupational, and Aesthetic Inquiry," *American Music*, 3 (Summer 1985), 180-197.

[5] "Lovely to Look At," 1935.

[6] "Stay As Sweet As You Are," 1934.

[7] "You May Not Be an Angel, But I'll String Along With You," 1934.

[8] "Try a Little Tenderness," 1932.

[9] "My Baby Just Cares for Me," 1930.

[10] "You Turned the Tables on Me," 1936.

[11] "The Girl Friend," 1926.

[12] "The Lady Is a Tramp," 1937.

[13] "You Are Too Beautiful," 1932.

[14] "My Heart belongs to Daddy," 1938.

[15] "Love For Sale," 1930.

Americana As Revealed Through Old Tin Pan Alley Era Songs

by

Robert W. Groves

Popular American sheet music produced during the heyday of the Tin Pan Alley era (1895 - 1930) represents an untapped source of information about America's social history during the first quarter of the 20th century. For most people these old song sheets are merely "collectible" remnants of yesterday's popular diversions and home entertainment activities. However, the texts and covers when studied in large quanities, become historical artifacts revealing a broad spectrum of attitudes and reactions to every major social trend and historical event of the period. These old songs detail the human side of American history—how people felt about and reacted to social and historical change. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate through discussions of selective topics and titles the historical value of song sheets and the potential they have as original source material for teaching and research.[1]

The appearance of song sheets related to war and soldiers, particularly during times of national conflict, was surpassed only by those songs concerning male-female relationships. Of particular interest are songs which concern the Civil War and World War I. Though the Civil War had ended 35 years earlier by the turn of the century, many of the animosities and emotional wounds felt by many Americans were still being expressed in song. The tension can be felt in the 1902 song "My Mother Was a Northern Girl" by J. Fred Helf, in which the father of a Southern girl reacts to the marriage proposal to his daughter by a Northern boy:

> Depart! Your dad and I were foes in the days of yore. I cannot forget those bitter years of strife, although I would. A Northern lad my lass shall never wed.

The sense of loss from the death of loved ones could still be felt through songs such as "Break the News To Mother" by Charles K. Harris (1987). The need for eventual reconciliation was also expressed through songs such as "I Love the Whole United States" by Roger Lewis and

[1] The following information is derived from the careful viewing of about 30,000 pieces of sheet music, most of which have been gathered by the author for his own personal library, and which have been categorized into over 200 topical groupings. References to specific songs are noted in the text by title, author, and date. An alphabetical listing is provided at the conclusion.

Ernie Erdman (1913), in which two old opposing veterans continue to argue loyalties. A young southern-born American soldier overhearing the argument admonishes the two of them by saying,

> Gentlemen, the war is through, so love the flag no matter where it flies.

A song titled "Rejected" with words by Ella F. Haslip and published in Chicago in 1909 tells a side of the war's aftermath that one seldom hears. The wife of a soldier killed in the war (probably the author's husband) decries the difficulties experienced by possibly many elderly widows:

> The cruel shell a victim found.
> 'Twas buried in his breast.
> Beneath the sunny Southern skies he lies fore'er at rest.
> His widow asks a pension now for she is old and gray.
> The nation's answer coldly comes, "No claim have you," they say.
> This boy in blue was brave and true, by country's call selected.
> Why should the claim his blood has won be now with scorn rejected!
> But tho' his body lies forlorn, his loved one lives neglected.
> This soldier boy at the golden gate will never be rejected.

The greatest number of war songs which presented the widest spectrum of American attitudes and experiences related to war were composed during the years of World War I. Prior to America's entry into the war in 1917, anti-war and isolationist songs were not as plentiful as those expressing sympathy and preparedness, but they contained equally strong and emotional messages. Many of them were written by Tin Pan Alley's most visible composers. "Don't Take My Darling Boy Away" by Will Dillon and Albert von Tilzer (1915), "If They Want to Fight, All Right—But 'Neutral' Is my Middle Name" by Jack Frost and James White (1915), and "I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be a Soldier" by Alfred Bryan and Al Piantadosi (1915) are just a few examples of the isolationism evident at the time. In 1915 even the venerable Irving Berlin

composed "Stay Down Here Where You Belong," in which the devil tries to convince his son to stay in the safe haven of hell rather than venture up to the insanity of the surface world:

> Stay down here where you belong.
> The folks who live above you don't know right from wrong.
> To please their kings they've all gone out to war,
> and not one of them knows what he's fighting for.
> Way up above they say that I'm a devil, and I'm bad.
> They're breaking the hearts of mothers,
> making butchers out of brothers.
> You'll find more hell up there than there is down below.

The song "There's No Need For Anyone To Borrow Trouble, For There's Plenty Here for All" by Fred C. Crocker (1915), published in St. Louis, argues that isolationism would not be as financially damaging to the United States as war.

Tin Pan Alley composers often felt compelled to answer songs with new ones expressing opposing views similar to the manner of newspaper editorials. The song that appears most often stating an opposing viewpoint to isolationism is "I'd Be Proud to Be the Mother Of a Soldier" by Charles Bahya (1915). Shortly thereafter, "Girls of America, We All Depend On You" By Edgar Leslie, Bert Kalmar, and Harry Ruby (1917), calls on the women of America to "shun everyone who won't shoulder a gun."

After America entered the war in 1917, anti-war songs all but ceased to appear, and many Tin Pan Alley composers who had written isolationist songs produced new ones that were fully behind the war effort. The typical war song from 1917-18 expressed unity, the fighting spirit, life in the trenches, duty, the supreme sacrifice, and the inevitability of victory.

In rediscovering the songs of World War I, the greatest interest often comes from finding songs that deal with the less obvious issues related to the war. Some of these titles include "Mr. Hoover, Don't Give Us A Loveless Day" by Debbie Peterson and Edward W. Penny (1918)—relating to the woes of rationing; "I'd Feel At Home If They'd Let Me Join The Army" by Jack Mahoney and Albert Gumble (1917)—dealing with the choice of getting married to avoid the draft; "Down in the U-17: A Musical Torpedo" by Roger Lewis and Ernie Erdman (1915);

"There'll Be A Hot Time For The Old Men While the Young Men Are Away" by Grant Clarke and George W. Meyer (1918); "The Makin's of the U.S.A.: A Plea In Song For Tobacco For The Boys Over There" by Vincent Bryan and Harry von Tilzer (1918); "The Man Behind The Hammer and the Plow" by Harry von Tilzer (1917)—calling on men with hammers or plows to do their best for the war effort; "If They Ever Put a Tax On Love" by Sam Erlich and Nat Osborne (1918)—bemoaning taxation in a manner similar to "Mr. Hoover. . ."; and "Camouflage" by L. Wolfe Gilbert and Anatol Friedland (1917)—a humorous treatment of what must have been a relatively new approach to warfare.

Women in the Tin Pan Alley songs, were generally portrayed as proud mothers, faithful mates waiting for their loved ones to return, or angels of mercy (nurses or Salvation Army volunteers). The title that perhaps best exemplifies this is "The Little Good For Nothing Is Good For Something After All" by Lou Klein and Harry von Tilzer (1918)—about a woman who becomes a Red Cross nurse.

On occasion one finds a song that deals with the negative aspects of a former soldier's life following the war. A striking example is "Bonus Blues" by Frankie J. Shultz (1922):

> Congress' got the blues,
> Wall Street's got'em too.
> Everybody wants to cry.
> There seems to be confusion about restitution of our dues

Another view of the same problem is stated in "Soldier Bonus Blues" by Jack Randolph, R. R. Lence, and John F. Carroll (1922):

> We fought to save our country and keep Old Glory free. We
> saved the allies by fighting over sea.
> We love the good old U.S.A. and Uncle Sam you bet.
> They promised us a bonus but we haven't got it yet.
> If they start another war we think it would be right
> for us to get our bonus before we start to fight.

The sad plight of native American veterans and their right to full citizenship is stated in "One Hundred Per Cent American" by Belle Ka Dell and Leo Friedman (1919):

No greater American patriot lives in our land today than these men who plead for their citizenship.
One hundred percent are they.
They have fought in each war for this country since the time when Columbus came here. His reception committee remember, was composed of these red men, dear . . .

In all likelihood no American institution has contributed more to the fostering and dissemination of racial and ethnic stereotypes than the popular song industry. Beginning with the earliest minstrel songs in the 1840's, stereotypical views of ethnic and racial minorities appear to have reached their peak from about 1895 through the mid-teens. Because of the enormous amount of this material produced by Tin Pan Alley publishers, it must be assumed that the buying public was quite comfortable with such categorizations of people and enjoyed escaping for a brief time into a humorous world of imaginary behavior by another segment of society. Despite the negative lasting effects of such songs, publishers and noted song composers must have produced these songs for purely lighthearted entertainment value rather than for any malicious intent. For reasons that sociological researchers may determine in the future, these types of songs appeared with considerably less frequency following the first World War.

After viewing the titles, texts, and cover illustrations of old sheet music, one can truly begin to comprehend in graphic detail the widespread notions of racism and ethnic prejudice in early 20th century American society. By today's standards many of these song sheets contained disturbing and offensive terminology and tasteless cover graphics, all of which must have been commonplace in early 20th-century American culture. Terms such as coon, nigger, picaninny, chink, wop, and dago were used freely. Humorous stereotyping must have been particularly timely for Americans during the period in which so many immigrants were entering the country and attempting to reconcile their old ways of life with those of their new homeland.

Despite their humorous intentions, the most tragic legacies of these song sheets were the establishment of class distinctions and what became assumed life styles, behavioral patterns, and dialectic language patterns within racial and ethnic minorities. Particularly common were charac-

terizations of African-Americans as lazy and uneducated with tendencies toward violence, gambling, unscrupulous love lives, and the stealing of chickens and watermelons. Examples are "What Are You Goin' To Do When the Rent Comes Around (Rufus Rastus Johnson Brown)" by Andrew B. Sterling and Harry von Tilzer (1905) and "Who Dat Say Chicken In Dis Crowd" by Paul Laurence Dunbar and Will Marion (1898).

Jews were generally portrayed as financially shifty as in, "That's Yiddisha Love" by Joe Watson and James Brockman (1910), and Italians were usually depicted as uneducated laborers with occasional ties to mafia-like activity such as in "My Brudda Sylvest" by Jesse Lasky and Fred Fisher (1908). "Blinky, Winky, Chinky China Town" (1915), by William Jerome and Jean Schwartz, is typical of hundreds of "Chinese" songs that appeared in the teens. Also commonly found are songs from the same period that characterized Japanese, Irish, Native Americans, and Germans.

Once the ethnic distinctions were established in the song sheet industry, the supposed absurdity of a stereotypical individual breaking out of his or her own defined position in American society was portrayed in songs such as "A Coon of Pedigree" by William Friedlander and John Larkins (1907), "I Got a White Man Running My Automobile" by Harry Zaun and Halsey K. Mohr (1906), and "Yonkel, the Cow-Boy Jew" by Will J. Harris and Harry I. Robinson (1907). The imaginary consequences experienced by individuals in mixed marriage situations attempting to reconcile their "inborn" differences can be seen in song sheets such as "The Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon" by Billy Johnson and Bob Cole (1897) and "It's Tough When Izzy Rosenstein Loves Genevieve Malone" by Gus Kahn and Grace Le Boy (1910).

Only a handful of talented black composers and lyricists were able to get published during the days of Tin Pan Alley. While it was a common practice to include photographs of song composers on the covers of the song sheets, it was extremely rare for the few published black composers to be identified by photograph. It can be assumed that few Americans were even aware that big-selling song sheets such as "Darktown Strutter's Ball" (1917) and "Some of These Days" (1910), were composed by a black composer named Shelton Brooks. In all probability the publishers hid the racial identity of black composers because white Americans would tend to not buy songs composed by blacks. In the relatively few

instances in which blacks were pictured on the covers, they were often dressed in the blackface make-up of a minstrel performer. The two black minstrels pictured most often on turn-of-the-century covers were the vaudeville team of Williams and Walker (Bert Williams and George Walker), who were billed as the two "real coons" as on the cover of "My Little Zulu Babe" by W. S. Estrem and James T. Brymn (1900).

The difficulties experienced by blacks attempting to enter the entertainment business simply as talented musicians are well-documented, but old sheet music actually brings the realities of the early 1900's into the 1990's. The fact that the majority of the songs composed by blacks before 1905 were "coon" songs with the standard stereotypes and black-face jargon attests to the notion that blacks had to imitate white performers and composers, who were in turn presenting highly inaccurate imitations of blacks. While far more "coon" songs were composed by whites than by blacks, the titles cited in this discussion that were composed by black composers are "Who Dat Say Chicken . . . " "A Coon of Pedigree," "The Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon," and "My Little Zulu Babe."

For those seeking photographs of early 20th-century black musicians without make-up, the best sources are the song publications by the four black-owned publishing houses in New York. These companies, which provided commercial outlets for black composers, were the short-lived Gotham-Attucks Company formed soon after the turn of the century, the Pace and Handy Company formed in the mid-teens, and two companies whose songs began appearing with some regularity around 1920, Perry Bradford Publishing and Clarence Williams Publishing. By comparing the number of song sheets still in existence from each company, one may assume that Pace and Handy and Clarence Williams were the only two that experienced any significant level of financial success.

The negative side of being black in America was seldom addressed in popular song sheets. Two exceptions are "Little Black Me" by Thurland Chattaway (1898), the story of a dying little black girl who wonders if she can go to heaven when all the angels are always pictured as white, and "Stay in Your Own Back Yard" by Karn Kennett and Lyn Udall (1899), in which a black mother tells her child:

> Now honey, yo' stay in yo' own back yard.
> Doan min' what dem white chiles do.

What show yo' suppose day's a gwine to gib a black little coon
like yo'?
Do stay on dis side of de high boahd fence, an honey, doan cry
so hard.
Go out an' a-play, jes' as much as you' please,
but stay in yo' own back yard.

A particularly cutting commentary by Gussie Davis, a black composer, is titled "There'd Never Been No Trouble If They'd Kidnapped a Coon" (1899). Comically illustrated on the cover as "a bit of black wisdom," the song asserts that a white child would be kidnapped before a black one would. The "wisdom" continues by stating that if a black child is kidnapped, there would be no trouble for the kidnapper since no one would care.

If one searches with the necessary persistence, songs can be found that comment on all the now-forgotten fads and popular trends, all the new inventions and technological advancements affecting American life, every current political or social issue, and every major historic event of the period. Examples of the diverse topics on which song sheets were based include the San Francisco earthquake, the sinkings of the *Lusitania* and the *Titanic*, the war with Mexico, Lindberg's flight across the Atlantic, and the Scopes trial in 1926. The portrayal of women in American culture made a rapid transition from the idealized Victorian role in the 1890's to being referred to as mamas, patooties, and old ladies following the male-threatening success of the suffrage movement. The issue of prohibition inspired hundreds of song sheets that bemoaned life and romance without liquor. Popular examples include "How Are You Going to Wet Your Whistle When the Whole Darn World Goes Dry?" by Francis Byrne, Frank McIntyre, and Percy Wenrich (1919), and "I'll See You in Cuba" by Irving Berlin (1920).

Forgotten popular trends in American life often can be rediscovered through song sheets. For example, between about 1903 and 1908 a number of songs appeared that described the seductive nature inherent in females eyes, which were often described as "goo-goo" eyes as in "Look Into Your Baby's Eyes and Say Goo-Goo" by R. C. McPherson and James T. Brymn (1903). The term "pal," referring to everything from wives and mothers to favorite pets, frequently appeared in song titles and texts between about 1918 and 1925. The symbolic use of the "rose" in

song texts was most prevalent between about 1909 and 1913. An exotic fascination with Hawaii was most evident between 1912 and 1918. There was a rash of monkey and jungle songs during the early teens and was followed by comic referrals to Darwinian theory in 1916-17. A positive thinking craze swept the United States during the 1920's called "Coueism" after the writings of Dr. Emile Coue, a French psychologist who claimed that positive thinking can make each day better and better. Hundreds of songs can be found from between 1923 and 1926 extolling the Coue philosophy suggesting that one could think, smile, hum, or whistle troubles into oblivion. The song, "Day By Day In Every Way I'm Getting Better and Better" by William Jerome and Jean Schwartz (1923), was "respectively" dedicated to him.

After the welcome demise of ethnic and racial songs, escapist song sheets reveal a new fascination with the exotic worlds of the south sea islands, southeast Asia, and especially the countries of the middle east. Most of these songs featured idealized women of other cultures, who undoubtedly represented imaginary alternatives to the threatening vision of fast and independent American women of the time.

Occasionally one comes across a song sheet that pertains directly to a current political election. The publishing of campaign songs and marches by Tin Pan Alley publishers implies that candidate or party platform endorsements by publishing companies existed in the same spirit as those by editors of large newspapers. The author's private collection contains politically oriented publications for each major campaign year from 1900 through the 1920's. Two examples are a Democratic presidential campaign song for John Davis titled "March To the White House" by Charles K. Harris (1924) and "The Bullmoosers (A Party War Song)" by Fritz Duquesne (1912). This practice seems to have stopped the depression years, during which such songs were published by the campaign organizations themselves or by supportive individuals.

Many other political or social issues that concerned the American public were addressed through published song sheets. Examples of these include the suffrage movement in "What's the Matter With Uncle Sam" by Mrs. Charles H. Toby (1913), the lack of jobs in "There Ain't No Use in Workin' When There Ain't No Work" by John Fiske and W. A. Bosenbury (1908), the homeless condition of hoboes in "You'll Never Be Missed 100 Years From Now" by Billy Rose, Mort Dixon, and Redmond

Farrar (1927), the Tammany Hall scandal in "Tammany" by Vincent Bryan and Gus Edwards (1905), socialism in "The Star of Socialism Is Brightly Shining" by Arthur A. Chief (1910) and "Get Up and Get Out" by Gordon Johnstone and Geoffrey O'Hara (1920), support for American commerce during the depression years in "Buy American and Good Times Will Come Thru" by Al Lewis and Al Sherman (1933), and even the frustration brought about by blue laws in "What Are We Goin' To Do When There's Nothing To Do On Sunday" by Jerry Pease, Ed. G. Nelson, and Mitchell Parrish (1921).

It should be noted at this point that some of the song sheets referred to thus far were not published by the major Tin Pan Alley publishers but by the individual composers themselves or by local publishing enterprises. One discovers after viewing thousands of song sheets that the most direct and personal messages about any given topic are most often found in local or regional publications. Although exceptions did exist, the large Tin Pan Alley publishers tended to produce songs of a topical nature that communicated underlying messages in a light-hearted manner. This approach was undoubtedly used so that large portions of the population would not be offended or become commercially alienated from a company. Expression through song sheets was a widespread phenomenon unique in scale to early 20th-century America. In order to make full use of this historical resource, the era of song sheet publishing must be viewed in its entirety. Therefore, the large Tin Pan Alley institutions of New York must be looked upon not only as sources for songs but also as institutions that standardize the means by which thousands of local individuals could express themselves.

The colorful covers of old song sheets also present a unique chronicle of American tastes in graphic art and clothing fashions, as well as an invaluable source of photographs of famous and forgotten composers, lyricists, Broadway performers, vaudevillians, motion picture performers, and early radio personalities. The covers provide primary source material for those wishing to study the development and impact of popular graphic illustration during the early 20th century. Many of the covers were signed by the illustrators, and their impact on American popular culture is considerable. The illustrators who most often signed their work include Fredrick Manning, Rolf Armstrong, Henry Clive, Pud Lane, E. Pfeiffer, Gene Buck, F. Earl Christy, Haskel Coffin, Archie Gunn, Van Doorn Morgan, and the last names of Starmer and

Barbelle. Occasional examples can even be found by Normal Rockwell and Albert Vargas. Noted publisher and composer-arranger E.T. Paull produced over 100 sheets between the mid 1890's and the early 1920's featuring eye-catching covers with five-color lithograph illustrations that sold quite well despite the questionable quality of the music itself.

Another aspect of Tin Pan Alley that is seldom considered is its role in the development of standard 20th-century marketing techniques. The need for sophisticated approaches to marketing song sheets was solved by using timely topics, eye-catching packaging, barnstorming techniques with song pluggers in restaurants and stores and on street corners, and celebrity endorsements with accompanying photographs and signatures on the covers. A photograph of Sophie Tucker or Al Jolson on a song sheet must have assured its success in the stores, since their names were used more often than those of any other performers of the period.

The practice of producing sequels to highly profitable song sheets, a marketing approach all too common in the television and motion picture industries of today, was also utilized by Tin Pan Alley publishers. In stacks of old music the physical condition of these follow-up songs is often considerably better than that of the original product. Since the condition of a song sheet can imply how often it was used, it can also imply its acceptance as a good, singable song by the public. Despite the predictable fact that song sequels did not match the quality of the original, the frequency of their appearance shows that they must have been profitable for the publishers and composers. Examples of this practice include the following: "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" (1910) was followed by "Since You Called Me Sweetheart" (1912); "Who Paid the Rent for Mrs. Rip Van Winkle" (1914) was followed by "I Know Who Paid the Rent" (1914) and "Rip Van Winkle Slept With One Eye Open" (1918); "A Bird in a Gilded Cage" (1900) was followed by "The Mansion of Aching Hearts (1902); and Wendell Hall's hit, "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo" (1923) led to the creation of his "It Looks Like Rain" (1924) and "We're Gonna Have Weather Whether or Not" (1924). If a song was sung too often, as the case must have been with "Yes! We Have No Bananas" (1923), a "blues" answer may have been written such as "I've Got the Yes! We Have No Banana Blues" (1923).

There were over one million different song sheets published during this period, so the amount of source material is indeed vast. In view of

what this material contains, it is surprising that scholars in the social sciences have not recognized its potential for analysis. The examples presented in this discussion have served only to scratch the surface of possibilities available to researchers and educators. The most obvious stumbling blocks to utilizing them are first locating large quantities of sheets and then finding the often elusive examples relevant to a specific area of interest. There are a surprising number of institutions and private collectors that possess large libraries of this material, such as the Kansas City Public Library, UCLA, Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, the New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress, just to mention a few. Unfortunately, most institutional holdings are largely unorganized, but the challenge of sifting through large quantities of music can be fun as well as enlightening. Certainly making use of this unique cultural resource will present challenges, but as the knowledge of song sheets continues to grow, so will a more intimate knowledge of The United States' social history.

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Unchained Melody: Postmodernism And Twentieth-Century Music

by

J. Allen Michie

There is traditionally no such thing as postmodern music. Chapters with that heading will rarely be found in books of music history. In light of several traits of postmodernism that have been discussed in relation to literature, architecture, painting, and photography, however, it seems evident that many of the same principles apply to certain kinds of contemporary music. The skeptical may object to the grouping of many distinct and different kinds of music under the same postmodern umbrella, but postmodern is so difficult to define in the first place that too much inclusionism at this point is better than not enough.

Perhaps it would be helpful to take a moment to locate just what "modernism" is in music before we can properly speak of "postmodernism." In a sentence, modernism in music was the discovery of relative harmony and, eventually, atonality. (The phrase "relative harmony" is being used as a parallel to "relative morality.") This refers to the realization that there is not one set perspective from which harmony can be judged: any combination of notes can be effective and expressive depending upon its context. Composers such as Varese, Bartok, Boulez and Stravinsky were among the first classical composers to pave the way for complete atonality, just as Kandinsky and Picasso made possible the achievements of Jackson Pollock. Atonality means that there is no underlying tonal center (stated or unstated) that anchors the harmony and places any one note in relation to any other note. Jacques Derrida writes that no single determinate meaning can evolve out of language because all meaning is ultimately deferred, and the same can be argued for the notes in the scale. For example, any one tone exists because it is not some other tone, and one tone always implies another. In atonal music, therefore, a determinate meaning (i.e., harmony) can never become established. The only rule in atonal music is that it must at all times remain atonal.[1] As with Derrida's theory of language, the ultimate deconstruction of structure must itself rely heavily upon a different kind of structure that is arguably every bit as tyrannical. Arnold Schoenberg's "twelve-tone" system of melody guarantees atonality because each of the twelve notes in the scale must be played before any one note can be repeated, but the price paid for harmony's freedom is melody's enslavement to a rigid and limited set of mathematically-derived combinations.

If this is the epitome of "modernism," then what can post-modernism be? There were novelists who asked themselves the same question after the publication of *Finnegans Wake*. Like postmodern authors, compos-

ers confronted with the pressures of modernism took a fresh look at the written and unwritten rules that govern their art. Postmodern composers seem to have agreed with their literary counterparts and arrived at the conclusion that the definitions of "classical" art are highly arbitrary and haunted by a long, weighty tradition whose legitimacy has never been seriously questioned. Just as postmodern poets like Christine Brooke-Rose experiment with the physical appearance of their texts, postmodern composers often search for innovative ways to "write" their music. Postmodern composers are aware of the gaps between musical notation and the sounds that they evoke to the same degree that postmodern authors are aware of the wide gaps between words and their range of meanings.[2] Ambiguity is given higher priority than authorial intention. A corollary of this semiotic position is an awareness of how the reader plays an equal or dominant role in the experience of reading and the production of meaning: postmodern composers are equally aware of how their music will be performed, who will be listening to it, what their other four senses will be doing while they listen, and how all of this contributes to the overall aesthetic experience. What follows in this article is a highly selective look at some of the individuals who, knowingly or otherwise, suggest these interdisciplinary parallels.

The transitional figure from modernism to postmodernism is Karlheinz Stockhausen. He has frequently written about his music and has given very poetic interviews. One of his recurring themes, as with many postmodern authors, is the role of the artist in society and their responsibility to history. Stockhausen, like his postmodern literary colleagues, does not reject history: he just questions its status as history and the way in which it has been handed down to us. In the words of Karl Worner,

> However they may choose to confront it, composers are increasingly aware of a burden to be shed, the precipitate of half-a-century's intellectual inbreeding—of music about music, music about theories of music and music about the history of music. John Cage has elected to shed the entire Western tradition, though even on him it has left ineffaceable scars; Stockhausen, more positively, has re-routed it.[3]

Stockhausen was an innovator in more than one way, and almost all of the ways are somewhat postmodern. He was one of the first to be self-conscious about music as an overall experience; aware of its presence in

the concert hall as an artistic "event." He was willing, therefore to sacrifice classical music's traditional privileging of the composer over the musicians and audience. Stockhausen was one of the first to expand the resources of classical music by systemizing the use of electronic instruments and recorded sounds introduced by Varese. He originated the important act of writing scores in radically new ways, realizing that the substance of the music is inseparable from the structure of the language that directs it. In a move that became particularly influential with avant-garde composers, he was one of the first to allow science to have a role in the music (the biology of the ear, limits and mechanics of sound frequencies, advanced laws of mathematics and probability, etc.)

Many of Stockhausen's innovations can be heard in his famous composition "Momente," composed for musicians and chorus. When we hear a chorus in a classical piece all we expect them to do sing. Stockhausen knows that the chorus is a group of living, breathing human beings no different from the audience, so he makes use of hand-clapping, foot-stomping and a wider range of the capacities of the human voice. The chorus makes "unmusical" noises that sound like talking and laughing, questioning the taboos of etiquette surrounding the performance of classical music and blurring the distinction between so-called life and so-called art. The beginning of the work has the chorus applauding the audience, mirroring the ending when the audience will, presumably, applaud the chorus.

Stockhausen often used laws of science, math and probability to guide his compositions, but it was John Cage who took this premise to its (il)logical conclusion and made complete randomness the cornerstone of his method.[4] Cage sometimes instructs musicians to follow the rules of Chinese "I Ching," a method of casting three coins six times, to randomly determine the structure and character of notes and musical ideas. One of his most frequently-performed pieces is for five radios: the score instructs the five musicians when to turn the tuning and volume knobs on their identical radios, and the audience hears whatever is or is not on the air. A darker example of the musical results of random generation can be heard in the unforgettable "Williams Mix."

Cage is perhaps the musical parallel to Marcel Duchamp. His music and "anti-music" bears certain family resemblances to the art and anti-art of Dada, a movement whose similarities to postmodernism have generally been underestimated. As with Duchamp, there is a theory

behind the madness. Just as Dada collage or postmodern literature remind us of the "textuality" of the world around us, Cage reminds us that the sounds around us are just as "musical" as anything that could be written in a formal classical composition. This is seen most directly in his 1952 piece "4:33," where the musician is to sit at a piano and play nothing for four minutes and 33 seconds. The audience is forced to listen to the sounds around them as the real music—traffic, clearing throats, confused laughter, rustling programs. They are also forced to consider the way classical music has privileged the virtuoso performer. The success of this work led to its inevitable sequel ten years later—"0:00," which is "to be performed in any way by anyone.

"There is a parallel between the postmodern literary technique of "writing under erasure" and the music of John Cage. In literature only one word can be read at a time, so postmodern works such as John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* often compensate by offering us alternate endings or by immediately juxtaposing one state of events with another. In music, however, it is possible to listen to more than one thing at the same time. Cage uses the phrase "circus principle" to describe music where two very different or opposing things are happening simultaneously, a surreal and deconstructionist twist on counterpoint. An example is "Fontana Mix," four separate and virtually unrelated compositions that can be played alone or together. Ten completely different styles of singing are juxtaposed by the same singer: jazz, lyric, contralto, Sprechstimme, dramatic, Marlene Deitrich, coloratura soprano, folk, oriental, babyish and nasal. This is deconstructionist collage and parody, presented as a sober challenge to traditional assumptions about the production and reception of art—a serviceable definition of postmodernism in the other media.

One of Cage's innovations that has particular relevance to contemporary literary theories is his idea of "textual music". No notes are given, just instructions in words. Some textual compositions make no reference to sounds at all. A good example of textual music comes from one of Cage's proteges, LaMonte Young. Here is the entire composition "Piano Piece for David Tudor #1":

> Bring a bale of hay and a bucket of water onto the stage for the piano to eat and drink. The performer may then feed the piano or leave it to eat by itself. If the former, the piece is over after the piano has been fed. If the latter, it is over after the piano eats or decides not to. [5]

Instead of silently interpreting words with private meanings, musicians share their interpretations of a text with the audience through a medium that is equally as abstract. The audience, in turn, is then left to interpret the interpretation. In Young's "Composition 1960 No. 3," the barrier between performer and audience is eradicated completely in the name of interpretation for its own sake: the lights are to be turned off, then there is a 50/50 chance that the audience will be told that whatever they did in the dark was the composition. Fringe sub-genres of textual music are "concept music" and "danger music," or music that exits—like language—only in theory.[6] One such piece calls for an impossibly high note to be played by an imaginary trumpet (Tom Johnson), another for a CBU bomb to be thrown into the audience (Phil Corner). (One is perhaps reminded here of the film *Batman* where the Joker aspires to be "the world's first fully practicing homicidal artist.") The point has something to do with the essentially arbitrary power we have given composers to tell us what to do and to tell us what is or is not art.

Linda Hutcheon defines postmodern literature as "historiographic metafiction," a term designating fiction which refers to its status as fiction and is aware of how history (real or imagined) can only be known indirectly through narrative. What was once decentered or marginalized often moves front and center. Hutcheon's theory of literature also makes for a convenient description of what is misleadingly known as "minimalist" music. Composers such as Philip Corner, Steve Reich and Philip Glass show their awareness of musical history by the repetition of small and familiar motifs, a return to the basic "alphabet" of music. What was once marginalized in classical music and used as the building blocks for larger melodies becomes the melody itself—the background is the foreground, and the motifs, scales and embellishments are the music. It is post-structuralist in its own way: it questions our expectations of melody and returns us to the building-blocks of harmony, just as Derrida questions our expectations of narrative structure and returns us to the semantic building-blocks of language.

Glass's minimalist operas are as postmodern in their content as they are in their form. He consistently chooses unorthodox subject matter (increasingly political), questioning what we expect of the typically "operatic." History is replaced by historiography: *Einstein on the Beach* juxtaposes the mathematician playing the violin on the beach with the landing of an alien spacecraft, just as John Barth interrupts his otherwise

"realistic" novel with extra-terrestrials in *The Sot-Weed Factor*. The libretto for parts of *Einstein on the Beach* instructs the chorus to count to four in every conceivable combination. Glass has taken the twelve-tone concept, reduced it by one-third, and translated it into language at its most abstract.

Glass' music depends heavily upon electronics. Even in an acoustic context, the instruments often seem to be imitating the sequencing function of a synthesizer. No one needs to be told by now that the emergence of electronics has been crucial to twentieth-century music. While Stockhausen's "Electronic Studies I and II" of 1953 were the first purely electronic classical pieces, two Parisians named Pierre Henry and Pierre Schaeffer had become infatuated with their portable tape recorder, which had just hit the market in the 1940s, and started the movement known as "musique concrete." Recorded sounds of trains, birds, people talking, random noise, etc. were sequed into live performance of acoustic instruments. The postmodern connection lies in the self-conscious and parodic nature of this music, how it questions the artificial boundaries people draw between what is and is not "music" and how we expect it to be performed "live." As heard in such works as Henry and Schaeffer's "Symphony for a Lone Man" in 1949, musique concrete closed the gap between live and recorded performance, between performance and text. Musique concrete, like postmodern literature, questions the status of the text and the privileging of the author—the music only exists on tape, on a record or in performance, so it can never be accurately "written." This is no news to musicians in the African, Asian and various folk traditions, but this was more or less the origin of a non-textual western classical music, setting the stage for the complete musical deconstruction by John Cage and his followers.

One current postmodern trend in contemporary classical music is the re-invention of the most "classical" of ensembles, the string quartet. By playing their instruments in strange ways or by playing the repertoire of jazz or rock musicians, groups like the Kronos Quartet or the Turtle Island String Quartet have challenged many assumptions about tradition and brought new life into a dying genre. Perhaps the most memorable single example is the Kronos Quartet's version of "Purple Haze," a composition from one of music history's stringiest musicians, Jimi Hendrix. Is it rock because it is Hendrix, or is it classical because it is a string quartet?[7]

There is much interesting postmodern music currently being done outside the realm of classical music. Stockhausen and Cage broke so many of rules so fast that the pace of radical innovation is classical music has slowed down, perhaps out of necessity. Many of their ideas are just now starting to filter into jazz and popular music, directly or indirectly, combined with new ideas that arise out of the various contexts of these musics. Different genres bring about different genre-busting techniques.

In rock music, postmodernism arguably started with the Beatles. *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was an album by the most famous rock band in the world at the time, posing (with no attempt at disguise) as another band which did not exist (or did it, only within the context of the album?). The Beatles not only showed a consistent ironic awareness of their own position as pop icons, but also were often aware of the interdependence of medium and message. The last sound on the *Sgt. Pepper's* LP is one continuous groove that repeats nonsense over and over, inviting the audience to consider the "vinylness" of what they have been hearing by defeating the automatic turntable and forcing them to get up and change the record. *The White Album* juxtaposed the deliberately cliched silliness of songs like "Why Don't We Do it in the Road" with pieces such as "Revolution Number Nine," which introduced millions of rock fans to the eerie studio-manipulated experimentation that John Cage and Stockhausen had been doing for years.

Studio manipulation in pop music today is alive and well, but cliched silliness is still the name of the game. Dance music has largely displaced more cerebral attractions at the top of the charts. Music Television has introduced a new energy and commercial viability to avant-garde imagery, however, as evidenced in MTV's dubious "Postmodern Video" programs. Appreciation for postmodern visuals has, so far, outstripped mass-market appreciation for the postmodern music which so rarely accompanies them. To isolate just one of the many exceptions, Laurie Anderson has always been self-conscious of how technology, melodies, rhythm, dance, film, abstract poetic lyrics and the spectacle on the stage all work together to create an artistic whole. She is one of the relatively few rock artists who takes full artistic advantage of the synthesizer's enormously postmodern ability to sample sounds.[8] She is able to use the kinds of combinations, strange juxtapositions and distortions that

postmodern literary artists strive to achieve with words alone. She will play an electronic violin, bowing a piece of audio tape across a tape recorder head rather than horsehair across strings, or lower her voice several octaves and assume a stereotypical masculine persona. Recent concert tours have seen her ask how one can separate the dancer and the dance, structuring her movements around the act of striking the drum machine built into her suit. Her keyboardist will occasionally wear a keyboard tie that is actually a working keyboard. There is always substance behind the gimmickry, however—pieces such as "Sharkey's Day" and "Smoke Rings" simultaneously question gender roles and the darkness behind the American Dream, while more whimsical pieces such as "Talk Normal" display a cynical, tongue-in-cheek attitude toward her own celebrity status.

One rock group that may require an introduction to many academic readers is Sigue Sigue Sputnik. This band's music can be interpreted as very postmodern, but in a different direction from Laurie Anderson's. Sigue Sigue Sputnik is part of the second-generation British punk scene. What came between the first generation and the second generation was American New Wave in the early 1980s. Bands such as Devo, the B-52s and the early Talking Heads fused the kitsch of 1950s pop culture with self-parodic modern video technology and cheap synthesizer sounds, and the juxtaposition created a kind of soulless postmodern effect. Sigue Sigue Sputnik maintains the tackiness and angular quirkiness of New Wave, adding the anarchic energy of Punk while juxtaposing irreconcilable musical genres: they especially seem to enjoy vandalizing classical music, making the same kind of point that Duchamp made by drawing a moustache on the Mona Lisa.

What separates Sigue Sigue Sputnik from most other mass-market rebels is their self-conscious attitude toward the commercialism of popular music, allowing them to satirize it in the act of exploiting it; a similar approach used by postmodern authors such as Italo Calvino in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* who exploits formulaic expectations of literary genres while deconstructing them. For example, Sigue Sigue Sputnik rents out advertising space on their album covers and mixes paid advertisements into their songs. Of course it is a gimmick, but they seem to **know** it is a gimmick, and the self-reflexivity therefore cancels itself out. Everything about them is completely exaggerated, from their mock-

Elvis hairdos to their sarcastic lyrics about the common rock themes of teenage love, lust and narcissism. The whole phenomenon is an intentional parody of pop culture, including itself.

There is a distinctive sub-genre of Reggae music that is postmodern more in its effect than in its intention, blurring the lines between parody and authenticity. "Dub" takes its name from the producer's and music editor's methods of "dubbing" one piece of tape onto another. This music maintains the essence of the reggae groove while weaving in sampled fragments of reggae conventions and cliches, usually in an altered or distorted form. The overall tone is more self-reflexive than outright satirical, and the atmosphere of experimentation is more earthy than academic. The music refers back unapologetically to its status as a kind of studio-built Frankenstein, but also looks forward at the same time and never loses sight of its function as innovative and appealing dance music with a definite Caribbean flavor. Early examples can be found in the music of Linton Kwesi Johnson, and more recent and postmodern examples would be Dub Syndicate and Twenty-First Century Dub.

One wishes that American R&B would learn from Dub how to take an ironic look at how formulaic it has become while remaining true to its base in African-American culture. Prince has taken a few steps in this direction, creating several successful innovations in instrumentation and arrangements, but there is no real irony in his borrowings from James Brown and Little Richard. He is better described as "contemporary" rather than postmodern. There is a great deal of self-reflexivity and sampling in rap, but there is yet to be anything that could be called a systematic deconstruction of itself and its own cliches. The closest thing to historiographic R&B metamusic to date is perhaps the early music of The Art of Noise, some of Soul II Soul's recent work, and the unexpectedly popular dance floor mixes of the group Enigma (who dubs samples of Gregorian chants onto a funky unsynchronized rhythm track). Some of the most postmodern R&B is found in music that uses elements of R&B, such as the jazz "fusion" of Ronald Shannon Jackson, James Blood Ulmer, Bill Laswell, and Steve Coleman with his fellow musicians of the "M-Base" school.

I would like to conclude with a more detailed look at jazz, the one field of non-classical music where the most interesting postmodern developments have been happening over the last 30 years. There is a great deal

of historiographic meta-music in jazz, as it is perhaps the one musical genre which is most amenable to postmodernism. For one thing, jazz is a purely twentieth-century art form. It is misleading to hear jazz musicians and critics speak of "classicism," "modernism" and now even "neo-classicism" in jazz: all jazz is essentially "modernist." From another perspective within the genres and sub-genres of jazz, anything after Charlie Parker and the emergence of be-bop around 1945 (the kind of music usually called "modern jazz") can technically be called "postmodern." [9] Also, jazz musicians have always been expected to play old songs in new ways, a distinctly postmodern frame of mind. As we have seen, much postmodern music depends upon the improvisations of musicians within a given framework, and as a general rule, jazz musicians are much more comfortable with spontaneity than are traditionally trained classical musicians.

Alto saxophonist, violinist and trumpeter Ornette Coleman has emerged as the most influential jazz theorist and composer since Thelonius Monk. He catalyzed the avant-garde movement in jazz, sometimes known as "free jazz" because it abandoned the traditional song structures and harmonic patterns inherited from the blues and Tin-Pan Alley which make up the bulk of the jazz repertoire. His musical theory is called "harmolodics," a linguistic and musical conflation of "harmony" with "melody." Coleman wants his musicians to consider harmony, melody and rhythm as equals, deconstructing the usual musical dichotomy of having a melodic solo voice that is to be played over a secondary harmonic background. [10] As Coleman has said, "Let's play the music and not the background". [11]

Free jazz is, in a sense, a throw-back to New Orleans or Dixieland jazz. It is a return to the idea of collective improvisation where everyone simultaneously feeds off of one another's ideas. As with the music of Philip Glass, free jazz is therefore a "back-to-the basics" approach with a modernist twist. On a purely sonic level, the music such as that found on the album *Free Jazz* may, to some ears, sound indistinguishable from atonal music. It certainly did to a majority of Coleman's early listeners, such as the ones who assaulted him after a club engagement and threw his saxophone off a hill.[12] This music is generally more intellectual than complete atonality, however, and it requires more cooperation and concentration from the musicians. Coleman's music is meant to be polytonal rather than atonal, simultaneously juxtaposing two or more tonali-

ties or key signatures. If the musicians are good enough and listening carefully, the group as a whole can improvise tonal centers as rapidly and efficiently as they improvise melodies.

Charles Mingus, Albert Ayler, Max Roach and John Coltrane connected free jazz to the politics of the Black Freedom movement during the 1960s, and the association is still valid for many musicians and listeners today. As Coltrane put it, "We all know that this word which so many people seem to fear today, 'Freedom,' has a hell of a lot to do with this music".[13] The connection of free jazz with the politics of the Black Freedom movement brings up a problem with categorizing this music as "postmodern," however. It is widely agreed that part of what makes something postmodern rather than deconstructionist, pastiche or simply eccentric is the element of parody, and by and large there is not much parody in the first generation of free jazz. This music was a life-or-death commitment for these musicians, and it was never easy for them to get their work taken seriously as artistic or political statements, not to mention trying to make a living. The rest of this paper will therefore focus on those artists who make use of Coleman's harmolodic language, but who say more satiric and "historiographic" things with it.

Anthony Braxton is one of the most ambitious composers in the history of jazz. He plays every reed instrument (including the rare bass saxophone, which is over six feet tall), and perhaps more so than any other musician has assimilated the theories of Stockhausen and Cage into a jazz context. He has adapted Stockhausen's technique of writing musical scores in a language unique to the piece itself, adding colors and three-dimensional graphics. Braxton's early music was modelled on Cage's desire to banish all subjective emotion from music in favor of objective mathematical formula—a step that was perhaps even more radical for jazz than it was for classical music. Braxton called his technique "conceptual transference," a mixture of deliberately different elements not unlike what Cage calls the "circus principle." As far as parody and historiographics are concerned, later in his career Braxton decided that emotion in music was not necessarily such a bad thing after all, and he began to record jazz standards transformed from the Stockhausen perspective. Braxton has returned most often to the compositions of Scott Joplin. Like Braxton, Joplin was a structuralist who straddled the fence between jazz and classical music, experimenting with questions of syncopation, balance, form, and recurring motifs.

Braxton is a member of an organization in Chicago known as the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, or the AACM. This aggregation became the most important "support group" for avant-garde jazz musicians in America, and several interesting collaborations and exchanges of ideas have come out of this family of like-minded individualists. One of the most important and entertaining of these collaborations is a group that has remained intact for over 25 years, the Art Ensemble of Chicago. The AECO parodies the entire jazz tradition, but they are able to create deadly serious and sophisticated music while doing so. They will often begin one of their pageants with a New Orleans parade through the audience, and may change styles of jazz performance and composition several times within any one piece. Like Stockhausen, Glass and Cage, they are very aware of their music as it exists as performance. They are likely to wear bizarre make-up and costumes on stage and do things like pass out paper bags for the audience to wear over their heads during the show. As with many of the musicians in the AACM, they take a cross-cultural view of jazz as a world music, and they do not hesitate to incorporate African, Brazilian, Indian, or any other kind of music into their own. What literary critics call "intertextuality," in a jazz context, often manifests itself as a global awareness of all music being the same in its spiritual essence. It is no accident that this awareness arose with the Black Consciousness movement in the 1960s, with its renewed interest in the spirit of Africa and its pervasive relevance to contemporary life in the United States. The pastiche of universalism is often avant-garde jazz's answer to racism.

No one is more universal than Sun Ra and his Arkestra. There was once a big-band-era pianist named Herman Blount, who, after a spiritual revelation in the late 1950s informing him that he was actually an immortal spiritual being from Saturn, became Le Sun Ra. The music is often comical without ever being contrived, artificial or insubstantial. Sun Ra is a devoted admirer of Duke Ellington, and often re-works Ellington's swinging tunes within a avant-garde, universalist context. Imagine the postmodern situation—here are about 15 middle-aged or older men and women, all dressed like choir boys in red velvet gowns with tuxedo shirts and gold glitter fezs on their heads, led by the 80 year-old Sun Ra himself playing swing piano and atonal synthesizer while dressed in a robe of glitter with a various unidentifiable cosmic objects on his head, brought on stage by female dancers with bright orange wigs and

fairy wings, all throwing themselves into a wild version of "Let's Go Fly a Kite" or "Slumming on Park Avenue." What differentiates Sun Ra from any number of gimmicky performers is his unwavering sincerity—the emphasis on the intergalactic gives him a vantage point from which he can look down on all the musics and religions on earth and see them as one coherent and uncontradictory whole. It is intertextual, self referential, parodic and historiographic; but it is too spiritual and simply too much fun to be merely an academic exercise in musical revisionism.

Avant-garde jazz in the 80s and 90s appears to be, for better or for worse, generally less political and cross-cultural than it was in the 60s and early 70s. It is, however, just as parodic and satirical and has returned to the basic structures of Coleman's harmolodics. Several of these musicians are directly aware of the principles behind literary deconstruction, and there have been a number of interesting reworkings of old jazz standards. This is done by repeating and distorting musical cliches, imitating exaggerated styles of melody, disrupting our expectations of songs we have heard hundreds of times before, and by juxtaposing or superimposing familiar melodies with strange noise. One typical (a relative term here) musician is Lester Bowie (trumpeter for the Art Ensemble of Chicago), whose band Brass Fantasy harmolodicizes such unlikely compositions as "It's Howdy Doody Time," James Brown's "I Feel Good," and Whitney Houston's "Saving All My Love for You." Other tongue-in-cheek deconstructionist groups include Power Tools (a sinister version of "Unchained Melody" is found on the album *Strange Meeting*) and Naked City, both bands featuring the smashing guitar of Bill Frisell. Special mention should also be made of the group Doctor Nerve, whose album *Beta 14 OK* features the composition "44 Nerve Events for You to Program in Inventive Sequences." This is the only attempt I know of to take advantage of the compact disk player's random access feature to bring the listener into a unique position in realizing the music: there are 44 individually indexed tracks lasting from one to ten seconds, including the individual notes of the twelve-tone scale, and the liner notes invite the listener to become the composer by programming them at random or in any sequence he or she desires.

Perhaps the single most postmodern musician alive today, jazz or otherwise, is John Zorn. His is historiographic meta-music if there is such a thing—his arrangements are full of unexpected juxtapositions, false and alternative endings, unexpected combinations of musicians and

styles, music under erasure, a total disregard for conventional musical boundaries, and an awareness of how music is contained by vinyl records and audiotape; everything being filtered through a harmolodic sensibility and applied parodically to the works of other composers. There are recognizable elements of musique concrete lifted straight from Varese and Stockhausen, but the effect is usually achieved in "real time" by agile musicians rather than by tape editing. A fine example is his take on the song "Der Kleine Leutnant des Lieben Gottes" which among other things combines Japanese koto music with banjo, duck calls, accordion, electric guitar, sound effects, and vocals in several languages, all applied parodically to a song by Kurt Weill and creating a miniature portrait of German society.

Academic formalism would clearly be the wrong approach to appreciating a composition such as "Der Kleine Leutnant." This is one of the most urgent lessons of postmodern music, the "garde" of which it is "avant." Yet when listening to your local public radio station, what does the disk jockey say about a piece (if anything)? He or she is likely to mention biographical facts about the composer, historical circumstances of its composition, other pieces that "influenced" it, and, especially with classical music, the mechanics of the musical form. By contrast, contemporary literary critics rarely have much to say about any of these things today. Formalism is dead, but the word has not quite made it over to the Music Department yet. Music critics generally are still not comfortable when someone starts to talk about the listener's role in realizing the music, psychology, supra-musical influence, the role of the media and concert hall, stereotypes of classical music, and questioning the legitimacy of authorial intention.[14] It appears for the time being that postmodernism will be relegated to its usual position on the underground fringe. There are some exceptions—just as *Name of the Rose* or *The Satanic Verses* have become best-sellers, so have Philip Glass and Ornette Coleman reached relatively wide audiences. As for new directions that postmodern music can take, I am not aware of any truly postmodern blues or postmodern country music.[15] This is a shame, because both of these styles have long histories and are full of cliches in sore need of deconstruction. Much work has been done, much has gone unacknowledged, and much is yet to be done.

Notes

[1] It has been said that pure atonality is theoretically impossible since any grouping of instruments will produce tones that are more dominant than others. The term is sometimes replaced by "pantonality" (or "inclusive of all tones"), although this concept seems to me to be even less theoretically viable. Actually listening to this kind of music often makes such arguments seem like academic quibbles. An example of polite atonality from classical music is Arnold Schoenberg's *Variations for Orchestra*, and an example of fierce atonality from jazz is "Improvisations" by the Globe Unity Orchestra.

[2] John Cage's book *Notations* does both, combining fragments of postmodern musical scores with self-reflexive fragments of quotes from the composers about the art of notating music. Which fragments of which scores appear on what page, which quotes accompany them by which composer, and in what typography the words appear are all determined through the random generation of I-Ching.

[3] Karl Worner, *Stockhausen: Life and Work* (Berkeley, 1973), 14-15.

[4] At least one classical composer was using random generation from as far back as 1751. William Hayes would dip a stiff brush into ink and splatter it onto the staff paper, a technique he describes in *The Art of Composing Music by a Method Entirely New, Suited to the Meanest Capacity: Whereby all Difficulties are Removed, and a Person Who has Made Never So Little Progress Before, May with Some Small Application, be Enabled to Excel.*

[5] Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (New York, 1974), 70.

[6] ibid, 71.

[7] The Greene String Quartet has recently upped the ante on Kronos, recording "Welcome to the Jungle" by the heavy metal group Guns and Roses. The piece is programmed alongside works by Aaron Copeland and Bela Bartok.

[8] Sampling is a technique where any recorded sound is translated into a digital code of sound patterns that can be reproduced and altered at will from a synthesizer. Rap artists have recently tested the legal boundaries of the copyright law by using "samples" of pre-existing songs, especially those of James Brown, as rhythm tracks or hooks. Synthesizer sampling in popular music has virtually supplanted its grandfather in classical music, musique concrete.

[9] In a 1984 issue of *Down Beat*, Alax Axelrod associates postmodernism with the post-bebop "neo-classicism" in jazz. "What separates the new traditionalism from the old is the acute self-consciousness of its practitioners, who appropriate the past with a calculated mixture of reverence and irony," he writes. "Like some architects of late, many composers now seek to overcome absolutist allegiance to tradition by using tradition, employing time-honored forms and gestures self-consciously, with wit and invention and in a self-opposing context of modernism. . . . At its most successful, post-modern art draws on a communal vocabulary in order to give a voice to individual vision" (48). Axelrod's comments appear in connection with reviews of new releases by pianists David Lopato, Martial Solal, Ran Blake, Kirk Lightsey, Joe Bonner, Patrick Godfrey, Wolfgang Dauner, Walter Davis Jr., Horace Tapscott, Marilyn Crispell, Sakis Papasimitriou, Fred Van Hove, and Borah Bergman.

[10] More precisely, Coleman has recently written that harmolodics is "the use of the physical and mental of one's own logic made into an expression of sound to bring about the musical sensation of unison executed by a single person or with a group. Harmony, melody, speed, rhythm, time, and phrases all have equal position in the results that come from the placing and spacing of ideas." Ornette Coleman, "Prime Time For Harmolodies," *Down Beat* 50 (July, 1983), 54-55.

[11] Quoted in Martin Williams, "Ornette Coleman: Innovation from the Source," in *The Jazz Tradition* (New York, 1983), 235.

[12] A.B. Spellman, *Four Lives in the Bebop Business* (London, 1967):124.

[13] C.O. Simpkins, *Coltrane: A Biography* (NY, 1975): 160.

[14] This is of course ironic, because classical composers have been in on the game all along. Mozart (a contemporary of Lawrence Sterne) has a piece named "A Musical Job" which is a concert piece masquerading as a serenade, toying with the audience's expectations of what kind of music will be played in what kind of progression in a concert setting, and his piece *Musical Dice Game, K.294d* is an eerie prefiguration of John Cage. Beethoven, too, knew all about false entrances and false endings.

[15] Amusing exceptions include the Surreal McCoys and the Austin Lounge Lizards (e.g., a fast bluegrass reading of Pink Floyd's "Dark Side of the Moon"), but neither has developed the concept deliberately or consistently, remaining basically conventional groups who perform occasional novelty numbers.

"I Know It's Only Rock & Roll . . .": Patriarchy, Culture, And Rock Music

by

Marjorie R. Abel

This paper explores rock and roll music in the context of U.S. culture and argues that rock and roll music cannot be reduced to sociological functions and that cultural meaning and patriarchal structure are encoded in the description and positioning of rock music in U.S. culture. The essay begins by examining the social construction of culture and cultural description, with an underlying goal to examine the problematic nature of defining culture in monolithic terms and explore the manner in which cultural meaning is constituted and interpreted.

The concept of culture, although used and abused freely among all the social sciences, has been central to the field of anthropology. Anthropology has struggled long with defining culture and usually resolved the problem through description. Historically, anthropology brought description of far away lifestyles to western social science. Constituted in western discourse, the "culture" of the "Other" became a bounded ahistorical or timeless object of study. Little attention was directed towards understanding how the discourse in the descriptions reflected the power of the dominant culture.

Beginning in the 1960s, anthropology not only witnessed the beginnings of major theoretical shifts but also changes in the lives of people it studied. Western contact and capitalist development altered the context of anthropology and the discipline had more difficulty locating "culture" in its "pure" form. Although anthropologists began to shift their focus to more contemporary arenas of study, the use of the comparative method often idealized "traditional" cultural practices in relation to modernization. Popular culture in western societies remained outside the parameters of anthropological cultural studies and in its study of western cultures, it joined sociology and focused on subcultures. [1]

In early sociological studies of subcultures the focus was on deviance and rebellion in urban environments. Dick Hebdige writes, "In such accounts, the subculture tends to be presented as an independent organism functioning outside the larger social, political and economic context".[2] The implication of this method of inquiry is that there is a more "complete culture" which these subcultures exist outside of, just as the culture of the "Other" was situated in opposition to western society. The analytical issue here is that the language of description of subcultures contains assumptions about the subject and relationships of power .[3]

Recently, social scientists, influenced by postmodern theory and narrative histories of popular culture, have raised questions about how

constructed images of the "Other" through language and text, can maintain the western power structure.[4] The work of the French neo-structuralist Michel Foucault has influenced postmodern social scientists as they seek to avoid constructing culture as an empirical unit and focus attention to the discourse used in text in the construction of culture.[5] The process of questioning the authorship of culture raises issues about the methods of traditional interpretation and moves towards an interdisciplinary mode of inquiry.

Drawing from the concerns of postmodern anthropologists, the task in this analysis is to observe the discourse by which the dominant culture describes rock and roll and to view rock music as an active force in the history and social relations of American culture. At the same time, I will provide insights into oral tradition and human agency as social practices reflected through the rock concert. The essential element of the analysis of rock and roll as popular culture is to explore how cultural hierarchies are constituted.

Despite the commercial success, extensive popularity, and social impact of rock and roll, the dominant culture continues to question its musical and aesthetic condition in the U.S. As Lawrence Grossberg states, "Rock and roll has, repeatedly and continuously, been attacked, banned, ridiculed, and relegated to an insignificant cultural status."[6] Descriptions in the late 1950s went so far as to suggest that it was communist inspired and a direct threat to the stability of American society. Rock and roll was essentialized into a social problem to be eliminated.

Even though rock and roll is receiving the attention of scholarly inquiry, on a descriptive level within a wide range of contexts, it is dismissed frequently as noise or unintelligible sounds with little aesthetic or musical value. Allan Bloom calls it "junk food for the soul."[7] Moreover, since the 1950s, there has been a persistent prediction of the "death" of rock and roll. Other critics emphasize the commercialization of rock in which audiences are characterized as passive consumers of mass culture.[8]

Yet, many academic disciplines are exploring rock and roll as a viable form of popular culture.[9] For example, structural critiques of rock and roll associate it strongly with youth culture and focus on it as a form of rebellion.[10] The description of rebellion suggests power relations in which the dominant culture defines the discourse by which to position

rock and roll. Descriptive language, such as alienating, rebellious, and non-conforming, exists within a specific political discourse. The creation of dichotomies assumes there is a common model for cultural behavior and a single monolithic rock identity. It ignores the complexity and contradiction in the cultural narrative of rock music in which both power relations and conformity are negotiated and changed. The functional interpretations and descriptions produce cultural opposition in which rock and roll is positioned as a marginalized musical and cultural form. In the power relations constituted in this discourse are assumptions that performers are lesser musicians and the music is inferior and "primitive." The dominant culture defines culture which is measured by European standards and " . . . recognizable only by those trained to recognize it.[11] Moreover, the emphasis on youth and rebellion creates a perception of rock and roll as unchanging and timeless, thereby denying its historical African American roots.

The immediate history of rock and roll is traced to the 1950s and the music and performance of individuals such as Little Richard and Chuck Berry, who created and established the cultural-musical effect of rock. However, the roots of rock and roll are formed in the American blues and its connection to the agrarian economy and racial segregation of the rural South, particularly the Mississippi Delta. [12]

The blues are situated in the oral and musical tradition of African-Americans. LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) describes the blues "... as a native American music, the product of the black man in this country...."[13] Traditionally, the blues focused on individual everyday experiences connected by a commonality of culture and shaped by specific power relations in the American south. Work, love, sex and conflict between men and women were themes repeated in blues discourse and identifiable in the lives of individual performers and listeners. These aspects continue to be dominant themes in rock and roll. The particular cultural formation from which the blues developed, and rock and roll inherited, was a product of African-American origins and a history specific to the U.S. Angela Davis suggests the themes of interpersonal relationships in the blues "functioned as metaphors" for life and trouble and contributed to black social consciousness in segregated America. [14]

During and after World War II, there was a large migration of African-Americans to northern industrial cities. George Lipsitz argues that defense production for World War II and its demand for industrial

labor created the cultural conditions for the development of urban rock and roll.[15] As had African-Americans who left the south at the turn of the century, the new arrivals brought their historical traditions of the blues and black folk music which they expanded and developed in the crowded, urban, industrial environments of cities such as Detroit and Chicago. The cultural understanding of the blues as a social expression and a musical form was combined with experiences in the urban context to create the musical form which evolved into rock and roll.[16]

Major blues artists such as John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, B.B. King, and others who created the musical context for rock and roll, were among those employed in factory jobs.[17] Other performers, like Robert Johnson, whose music connected the Mississippi Delta blues and urban culture and whose songs have been recorded by the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, and ZZ Top, remained hidden from history until recently.[18]

However, it was not just individuals and their music which brought the growth and appreciation of the blues, as well as the creation of rhythm and blues and rock and roll; rather, it involves the entire black experience, cultural history and communality.[19] Although themes and musical riffs are essential elements in the inheritance from the blues, it is the oral tradition of cultural performance which has had the greatest and enduring impact on rock and roll. In the creation of the performance, the rock band symbolizes identity with the audience on a cultural, physical, and musical level. One of the salient characteristics of rock and roll, particularly evident in rock concerts, duplicated in music videos, and embodied by listeners, is participation. The essence of the rock concert is the energy it creates in the dialogue established between audience and performers. It involves a multitude of events such as dancing, singing, cheering, the lighting of cigarette lighters throughout the audience or individuals throwing panties and bras onto the stage. However, the basic aspect of participation is the call and response.

The call and response structure can be traced to African poetry and music which allows for dialogue with the text and contributes to communality and collaboration between audience and performers.[20] Although the Africans who were captured, enslaved and brought to North America during the slave trade had varied origins, distinct histories, and cultural heritages, they shared social traditions surrounding their music. African music was integrated with drama and a part of the oral tradition of the collective experience of everyday life.[21]

The call and response was a vital aspect of African-American music. Derived from the oral tradition, it survived and adapted to the particular cultural, political-economic complexities of the American south. The call and response was characterized in black slave music by the lead singer beginning the song and others joining in singing on the refrains, the "hollers and shouts" could be repeated again and again.[22]

Performance practices ultimately determined the character of slave music, blues, and rhythm and blues, which resulted in improvisation and variation as the music took shape during performance.[23] These characteristics of African-American folk and blues are critical to the essence of what constitutes rock and roll. When Little Richard sings "Good Golly Miss Molly, you sure like to ball" two times, and then completes the verse with a third line that comments on the first two—"When you're rockin' and a rollin', you can't hear your mama call," and when throughout the song instrumental bursts "answer" and "respond" to the vocalist's "call" the African-American connection is made clear.[24]

The vocalization of the call and response by the performer can be entered into by other stage performers, instruments creating riffs, and the audience as they become part of the performance. At this point, the articulation of the song's words are subsumed by the democratic spirit created in the text of performance.

Rock groups, such as the Rolling Stones and Aerosmith, have mastered the aspect of participation and emotional impact contained in black-music tradition. John Wells describes the emotional connections between the Rolling Stones and their blues heritage.

> From their earliest records the Rolling Stones embellish Black expressiveness; Mick Jagger's vocals usually include an amount of distortion, groans, moans, howls and screams, often using phrasing that is barely intelligible. Again, emotional feeling is emphasized over and above articulation, and as in African music, the repetition of phrasing and rhythm often leads to a creation and resolution of tension. [25]

Communal participation through the call and response blurs the division between audience and performers. Participation is connected with performance practices which place the performer in a continual dialogue with non-performers. Pauses in the vocal dialogue of the

performers are filled with clapping, responsive yelling and screaming as well as physical movement by the audience. The participation is related also through oral tradition or story-telling connected with the concert. The oral tradition begins with participants waiting in line for tickets where accounts of past concerts are related. Likewise, waiting for performers to appear and late starting concerts create tension and dramatize the ritual occasion in which oral recollections of previous concerts are reinterpreted to signify participation.

The social aspect of participation and audience elaboration upon the musical text are embodied in and structure the practice of rock and roll. This not only distinguishes rock and roll from classical and popular music but contributes to the enduring qualities of specific rock groups. And, to a large extent, the participatory effect accounts for the premier desirability of live performance and "bootleg" tapes which document participation. The social significance of drama, performance, and democratic spirit of the audience is captured in rock and roll as an American art form.[26] However, rock and roll was not the creation of an entirely new musical form but grew out of the musical tradition of black America.

A central argument of this paper is that the social construction of culture has created a marginalized position of popular culture, particularly rock and roll music, in cultural discourse. The discourse which describes rock music as a function of youth rebellion and alienation, or as a commercial commodity, denies rock music, and its predecessors the blues and rhythm and blues, active roles in American musical and cultural tradition. These interpretations illuminate more about the dominant culture than the music. It is within the social interaction of performance and democratic spirit that rock performers and audience contest the patriarchal structure of culture.

Patriarchy draws much of its power from the differentiation between gender constructs in which the social construction of gender roles (woman vs man) become a fundamental concept of sexual identity.[27] The expressive androgyny in rock performance and the aggressive participation of females of the audience directly challenge these cultural constructs.

Likewise, as male rock performers explore gender ambiguities and flamboyant performance they contradict the patriarchally ordered meaning of "manhood" associated with rational, disciplined work-behavior.

Rock groups further contest structured behavioral positions through rock discourse; Guns and Roses sing, "Nice boys don't play rock and roll."[28]

Performers like Little Richard and Prince openly display gender ambiguities through behavior, make-up, and clothing. Many rockers use contradictions in gender roles and dress in their performance. Aggressive male engendered body movement and posturing is juxtaposed with a range in decorative display, such as earrings, bracelets, necklaces, spandex or mesh-like pants, eye shadow and dyed blonde hair, signs more often associated with females. [29] However, the performance dramatization also may have historical significance.

The flamboyant drama and display of contemporary male rock performers was characteristic of early women blues musicians. In his description of "classic blues women," William Barlow comments:

> Ms. Rainey's stage appearance was legendary. She was a flamboyant dresser who usually wore expensive floor-length gowns laden with glitter and frills and carried a huge, frosty ostrich fan. She also wore a tiara set with diamonds and a fine array of diamond rings, earrings with diamonds and a fine array of diamond rings, earrings, and necklaces.[30]

In the dialogue between performers and audience the aggressive sexual movement of rock performers (predominantly male) moves from the stage to the audience where sexuality is expressed in responsive dance and movement. Although both men and women enter into the performance, it is the participation of women in the expression of female sexuality which is the most threatening to patriarchal cultural norms. Women, adopting aggressive sexual behavior in body movement or by throwing bras and panties on the stage and/or tearing off their shirts, challenge their constructed role of passivity and domesticity as ideals for female behavior. The sexual expressiveness of women signifies a break in social control in which patriarchy interprets and limits female social behavior.

From patriarchal cultural hegemony, popular criticism attacks the sexual expressiveness in rock lyrics and performance. Some groups attack the lyrics through domestic ideology concerning the family and cultural decency. Functional analyses interpret sexual lyrics and explicit sexual

expression in performance by male rockers as simply another example of female exploitation. Moreover, functional perspectives interpret body language in the performance of male rock stars as just another means of reinforcing the norms of patriarchal power. There are a number of problems with this perspective. This linear association is a limited and somewhat inadequate reading of the text of rock performance and the interpreted meaning by the audience. It assumes the female audience to be passive "cultural dopes" manipulated by patriarchal ideology to identify with rock performance only through the social construction of "female."

The functional perspective draws from a socially constructed gender ideology in which the female audience can only respond to aggressive sexual movement and lyrics as passive females. Consideration is not given to the complexity in performance messages and the practices of active participants as they realize sexual meaning.

The female audience actively participates in performance in which aggressiveness in song and body movement may have a similar empowering effect on both males and females. The contradictions in gender identify in adornment, clothing and movement allow for a multitude of meanings or messages of interpretation.Exhibiting sexuality may reflect a feeling of control and empowerment by female actors and can undermine and oppose patriarchal constructs of sexual behavior.[31]

Sexual meaning in rock's interpretation needs to be explored from new perspectives which avoid reductionist parameters of patriarchal ideals that assume male control of audience interpretation. Examining rock's heritage in the blues, illuminates the historical continuity of the role of sexual boldness in lyrics and performance. Ma Rainey was well known for her sexual expressiveness on stage and as Sandra Lieb notes, "In her most striking recordings Ma Rainey deals with prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, and sadomasochism."[32]

Whereas performance threatens patriarchal norms of gender identity, the denial of rock and roll's musical and historical significance reinforces the hierarchal position of the dominant culture. The patriarchy of culture is constituted in a hierarchy in which the standards of music interpretation are derived from a European classical heritage and this " . . .reference determines value."[33] LeRoi Jones commenting on the western interpretation of the quality of African-American music states:

> The hoarse, shrill quality of African singers or of their cultural progeny, the blues singers, is thus attributed to their lack of proper vocal training, instead of to a conscious desire dictated by their own culture to produce a prescribed and certainly calculated effect .[34]

By describing rock's beat as "earthy" or "crude" the patriarchal structure of society maintains control of the western ideology as dominant culture.

Rock and roll, through its democratic spirit of participation, initially had the potential for the integration of black music and performers with both black and white audiences and culture. In the 1950s, white teenagers "discovered" the sounds of rhythm and blues and were drawn to the rock music and performance of Little Richard, Fats Domino, and Chuck Berry. Almost immediately a music which had been ignored by white America became the focus of anxiety and rejection.[35] The refusal of patriarchal America to "accept black music played by black musicians according to black definitions" goes beyond the question of music to the larger social issue of racial integration which becomes translated into an anxiety discourse concerning morality and the corruption of youth.[36]

The question remains as to why rock and roll continues to be interpreted in the language of rebellion and threat, thereby removing it from serious consideration and analysis on the basis of musical quality rather than in social constructs. The control of cultural discourse about music preserves the disciplined, segregated conceptualization of cultural roots; cultural domination legitimizes Eurocentric interpretation of American culture. While black music and cultural performance is embodied in rock and roll, the ideology of what constitutes American culture serves to set it apart from participation in the dominant culture.

In *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, Lawrence Levine discusses extensively how the conception of culture in music and performance was transformed and redefined in the U.S. during the 19th and 20th centuries. Levine suggests that the American elite not only transformed performers to " . . .sing the songs of the masters without imposing their own wills . . ." but they extended their authority to the audience:

> Their general success in disciplining and training audiences constitutes one of those cultural transformations that have been almost totally ignored by historians .[37]

Drawing on these observations, my intention has been to explore the discourse surrounding culture and rock and roll and to illuminate the tensions involved in relation to the patriarchal construction of culture.

The maintenance of European culture through the segregation of music represents larger socio-political issues in which the construction of difference enforces and sustains the elite culture of patriarchy. The recognition of rock as a cultural musical form would legitimize it as an American musical tradition which would allow it to be compared and evaluated on equal musical terms with Eurocentric classical music. That is, rock music would cease to be "the other" or the product of cultural deviance.

Legitimizing rock's African-American roots would signify the contribution of African-Americans to American culture. African-American culture could be recognized for its distinctiveness as well as its critical contribution the totality of culture. As importantly, it would allow for avenues by which to recognize the particular contribution of black women to American music. This would establish historical continuity and an understanding of cultural exchange.

However, the interpretation of American culture remains fixed in the reflection from European traditions. Thereby, elements of American culture which do not replicate Eurocentric standards are interpreted as cultural deterioration. The patriarchal construction of culture essentializes and maintains class, racial and gender division.[38] Socially constructed notions of gender and sexuality are embodied in patriarchal conventions which interpret both cultural performance and audience response.

Social scientists studying culture need to explore meaning in American culture and challenge monolithic models which focus on culture as an *object* of study rather than as a problematic construct. Culture is a site of conflict in which patriarchal institutions seek to control and maintain the elitism of cultural heritage. It is assumed often that culture is a neutral entity in which everyone has equal access to cultural discourse but there is a connection between culture and politics.[39] Social hierarchies are constituted in description and cultural discourse can serve as legitimization for maintaining relations of dominance and notions of "Otherness."

Notes

[1] For a general discussion of theories of culture see: R. Keesing, "Theories of Culture"; S. Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties"; R. Wuthnow, J. Hunter, A. Bergesen, and E. Kurzweil, *Cultural Analysis*. See: E. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without a History* for a discussion of the historical interconnectedness of societies and the political economic approach to studying culture. For insight on questions about the totalizing concept of culture see, Jane K. Cowan, *Dance and the Body Politic in Northern Greece* (1990). For a discussion of anthropology's shift in focus from small scale societies to complex societies in which the focus remains on narrow units of study see Valentine (1968: 101-102). Valentine provides examples of subculture studies and the inherent problems with this mode of inquiry. See: Mintz (1985: xxvi-xxvii) for anthropology's method in studying "modern" society. Chandra Mukerji and Michal Schudson review anthropological studies in popular culture. See the "Introduction:" in *Rethinking Popular Culture* (1991).

[2] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1989:76).

[3] See: J. Clifford and G. Marcus *Writing Culture* for an elaboration of the construction of ethnographic texts. Geertz in *Works and Lives* questions anthropology's ability to construct culture and discusses the subjectivity of ethnographic texts. Also, see: S. Ortner (1987:1-9) for a discussion of the contradictions in cultural analysis. For issues surrounding writing in a culture of domination and a critique of the lack of non-white scholars in Clifford and Marcus' analysis, see: Bell Hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, specifically pp. 123-133.

[4] The "literary" approaches to history explore popular culture and uncover the actual historical experiences of individuals as well as rendering the limits of their lives (Davis 1983; Ginzburg 1982; Ladurie 1979; Levine 1977; Williams 1983). Departing from the narrowly construed definitions of culture, authors such as Ginzburg (1982), remove "popular culture" from the realm of idealogy and situate it in the class relations of historical discourse. For anthropology the narrative histories are influential examples of text which expand the study of popular culture.

[5] The discourse of ethnography informs us concerning both the author and the subject. A primary concern of postmodern anthropologists it the method by which anthropologists "have conceptually constructed their subjects" (Marcus and Fischer 1986:86). See Marcus and Cushman, "Ethnographies as Texts" (1982) for a review of the development of this perspective in the anthropology. In his essay "What Is an Author?" Michel Foucault raises some interesting questions about authorship and power. See, Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (1988:113-138). Clifford Geertz explores the anthropologist as author in *Works and Lives* (1988).

[6] Lawrence Grossberg, "Is There Rock After Punk?" (1990:114).

[7] Quoted in Lawrence Levin, *Highbrow/Lowbrow* (1988:250).

[8] It should be noted that there is debate concerning the commercialization of rock music in relation to its roots and ability to raise political consciousness and resistance. Much of the debate centers around whether the rock audience is an active agent or a passive respondent to commercial messages. I suggest that commercialization and resistance are not mutually exclusive. Like all forms of culture, popular culture is in a constant flux in

which articulations of power and individual expression are played out and negotiated in participation. For an extensive account of rock music as a form of resistance to dominant culture and political ideology in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union see, Timothy Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc* (1990). Also see, George Nelson, *The Death of Rhythm & Blues* (1989) on crossover marketing and the commercialization of rhythm and blues.

[9] For a review of some of the major approaches see, *Rethinking Popular Culture* (1991) edited by Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson; Deena Weinstein, "The Sociology of Rock: An Undisciplined Discipline" a review article in *Theory Culture & Society* (1991).

[10] For a discussion of the contradictions in this descriptions and the "deconstruction of youth" see: Grossberg, "Is There Rock After Punk?" (1990).

[11] Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow* (1988:252).

[12] William Barlow, *Looking Up At Down* (1989); LeRoi Jones, *Blues People* (1963); Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans.*

[13] LeRoi Jones, *Blues People* (1963:17).

[14] Angela Davis, "Black Women and Music" (1990:12).

[15] George Lipsitz, *Time Passages* (1990:117). Nicholas Lemann writes in *The Promised Land* (1990:6-7) that the mechanization of cotton-picking resulted in "agricultural displacement" in which approximately five million black Americans moved from the South to the North after 1940.

[16] Cleveland disc jockey Alan Freed is given credit for introducing the term "rock and roll" in 1951 (Southern 1971:505). For a discussion of the borrowing of the term "rock and roll" from black music and its implications see: Nelson George (1989:66-67 & 91).

[17] Lipsitz, *Time Passages* (1990:17-18). LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) (1963:97) notes that the Ford Motor Company was one of the first companies to hire blacks and correspondingly there are many blues songs written about Ford. (Amiri Baraka used the name, LeRoi Jones, at the time he wrote *Blues People.*)

[18] Barlow, *Looking Up AT Down*, (1989:45-50); Greil Marcus, *Mystery Train* (1990:19-35); Alan Wells, "Popular Music: Emotional Use and Management" (1990:105-117). Over fifty years since his death, the cover of *Musician* (January 1991) proclaimed, "Robert Johnson: The Father of Rock & Roll" with tributes from Keith Richards and Robert Plant.

[19] For a discussion of the growth of rhythm and blues see: LeRoi Jones (1963:170-174). The term rhythm and blues originated in the 1940s and for an extensive discussion of the music and culture of rhythm and blues see: Nelson George, *The Death of Rhythm & Blues.*

[20] Jones, *Blues People (1963:26-27).*

[21] "The legions of folk musicians and songsters who created and sustained the blues in their infancy were African-American variations on the famous West African "griot" tradition. The griots were talented musicians and folklorists designated to be the oral carriers of their people's culture . . .Griots preserved the history, traditions, and mores of their respective tribes and kinship groups through songs and stories. They composed songs and praise

[22] Jones (1963:26 & 82); Lipsitz (1990:110).

[23] William Ferris, *Blues From the Delta* (1984); Jones, *Blues People* (1963); Souther, *The Music of Black Americans* (1971).

[24] Lipsitz, *Time Passages* (1990:110).

[25] John Wells, "Me and the Devil Blues: A Study of Robert Johnson and the Music of the Rolling Stones" (1989:161); This tradition can be traced to Classic Blues women singers such as Ma Rainey, "Ma liked to moan along with a song during the breaks in the lyrics. She also used slurs and glissandos to emphasize her blue notes, much like the early rural blues singers" Barlow, *Looking Up at Down* (1989:157).

[26] See Greil Marcus, *Mystery Train* (1990:4-6). Lawrence Levine in *Highbrow/ Lowbrow* (1988) discusses the audience as participants during the 19th century. Levine argues that, during the nineteenth century, there was a shared public culture in which audiences participated in performance. He elaborates on how the meaning of culture was transformed in 20th century American resulting in disciplined performers and audience.

[27] Heidi Hartman (1976:139) defines patriarchy as "the system of male oppression of women." Hartmann argues that, in capitalist society, job segregation by sex is the primary mechanism by which men maintain dominance over women. Also see: Zillah Eisenstein, *Capitalism Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*; Nancy Folbre "Patriarchy in Colonial New England" and "Exploitation Comes Home: A Critique of Marxian Theory of Family Labour."

The concept of patriarchy has been most often discussed as a system grounded in the material base or the economic system of society. I suggest that patriarchy is embedded in cultural meaning and can be culturally reproduced, maintained or challenged by both men and women. However, it is the dominant culture (primarily white and male) which benefits the most from the maintenance of patriarchal structure. A broader cultural context for defining patriarchy also includes the social relations of class and race.

[28] "Nice Boys." Guns N' Roses, *G N'R Lies*. Produced by Guns N' Roses. The David Geffen Company, 1986.

[29] The female pop icon and singer, Madonna, has captured the essence of these cultural gender contradictions in her performance. She sues the drama of performance to question domination and submission and her stage presence challenges patriarchal cultural domination. It is this sense of empowerment, challenge, and control in Madonna's performances which contributes to her following of young teenage women. There is extensive discussion of meaning in Madonna's text. See. Lynne Layton (1990) "What's Madonna Teaching Us?"; John Fiske (1989:95-113) "Madonna."

[30] Barlow, *Looking Up at Down* (1989:157).

[31] For a discussion of rock music and sexuality as well as challenges to the idea of the passive female rock fan see the following essays in *On Record* edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (1990): S. Frith and A. McRobbie, "Rock and Sexuality"; Sue Wise, "Sexing Elvis." For a discussion of the antidomesticity of rock and roll see: Grossberg (1990:121).

[32] Sandra Lieb, *Mother of the Blues: A Study of Ma Rainey* (1991:171); In "Black Women and Music: A Historical Legacy of Struggle" Angela Davis explores the manner in which Ma Rainey's music and performance illuminates the experience of Black women's lives. More research needs to be done to establish the contribution of the women blues performers to rock and roll music and performance.

[33] Jones, *Blues People* (1963:17).

[34] Jones, *Blues People* (1963:29-30).

[35] It was at this time that numbers of "clean cut" white performers were employed to create sanitized "rock and roll." Although this aspect of rock and roll has been discussed extensively, see Nelson George, *The Death of Rhythm and Blues* for a broad understanding of the issues. Portia Maultsby (1989:171) discusses how whites protested the playing and buying of black records.

[36] See, Portia Maultsby, "Soul Music: Its Sociological and Political Significance in American Popular Culture" (1983:170-171).

[37] Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow* (1988:184).

[38] For discussion of cultural hegemony in relation to race and gender see: Bell Hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics.* In *Invisibility Blues*, Michel Wallace discusses cultural criticisms and its relationship to black feminism. Of particular interest is her discussion of cultural interpretation and critique of cultural production by black individuals. See: "Michael Jackson, Black Modernisms and 'The Ecstasy of Communication'" Pp. 77-90.

[39] For an extensive discussion of the political significance of rock music in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe see: *Rock Around the Block* by Timothy W. Ryback. For a discussion of "official" culture and politics see: Vaclav Havel, "Six Asides About Culture."

Meddling in Metal Music

by

Dennis D. Phillips

A reformation of sorts took place in the music industry during the 1980s. Cassettes and compact disks replaced vinyl and added a personal portability of music that superseded radio. Dave DiMartino, writing in *Billboard* magazine, noted that "the CD allowed companies to rake in the bucks on product that, in some cases, was one step away from actually being deleted."[1] Music television gave a look to the sound. Numerous writers in the popular press even attributed to music television the credit for revitalizing the music industry .[2] Systematic study of chart performance and record sales identified a role of music television in creating a "superstar phenomenon"[3] of the 80s, but tempered the influence of music television as a sole impetus for music revitalization .[4] Nevertheless, artists like Madonna, Bruce Springsteen, Duran, Duran, Prince, Janet Jackson, Paula Abdul, and Def Leppard attained mainstream music superstardom, boosted, probably in some measured, by their videos. The talent and video production value of Michael Jackson "confirmed once and for all the sales potential of black music,"[5] Finally, by the end of the decade of the 80s, heavy metal became the fastest selling video music category[6] and the biggest seller of all recorded music genres.[7]

This work has three goals. First, to refine a working definition for heavy metal that delineates the genre through means other than chords and musical progressions by drawing upon the popular and scholarly literature as well as questionnaires and personal interviews with 177 adolescent and college age people. The data is then discussed in terms of perceptions of heavy metal music and its performers. Second, to trace the historical development of heavy metal music, with special consideration given to *Billboard* chart performance and music video exposure. Finally, to explore some primary gratifications associated with the audience of heavy metal music and establish some perspectives for those vilifying its use.

In discussing popular music, R. Serge Denisoff concluded that it has never been "monolithically standard with all young people,"[8] and referred to it as "a cultural artifact shared by specific subgroups in the social order. Music may represent the taste of a subculture within a culture or that of a counterculture that exists in opposition to the dominant one."[9] In the 80s, the popular music tastes seemed especially splintered. And the splintering, perhaps working within the nexus that included music video, resulted in a mainstreaming of sub-cultural genres, one of which was heavy metal. Perhaps partly as a result of its newfound

popularity, heavy metal bore the brunt of much of the critical wrath leveled against music lyrics and their potential impact on youth behavior.

Critics and scholars have offered some contradictory conclusions about what constitutes heavy metal music. Sociologists Paul Verden, Kathleen Dunleavy, and Charles H. Powers used the following explanation as a basis for researching the relationship between heavy metal music and adolescent delinquency:

> Heavy metal tunes are structured around a minimal set of crashing guitar chords. Vocals are of secondary importance . . . Such bands rely on high decibel levels and ostentatious showmanship . . . The heavy metal experience, then, derives from the performance, the bombastic sound of the music, and lyrical content in descending order of importance.[10]

Thom Gencarelli has concluded that heavy metal even in its most generic form "has always been a fairly primitive, rudimentary form of music."[11]

Writers in the popular press have extended the discussion to include show and conquest. David Gans offered the following in *Record*:

> Metal is nominally a style of music, but music is virtually beside the point. What's important is that the performers, staging, graphics, and sound be as vile, repellent and loud as possible.[12]

Writing in *Rolling Stone*, Anthony Decurtis suggested that the defining factors of the genre include the attitude and the look of the artists.[13] Others have suggested "there's no message to heavy metal. It's about being rich and famous and getting laid."[14] Heavy metal is "an apolitical sound more concerned with the conquest of women that the triumph of the spirit."[15] People "play heavy-metal music and have a good time."[16]

In contrast, sociologists Jonathon S. Epstein and David J. Pratto, when discussing lyrical themes and subject matter in heavy metal music, concluded that " . . . the overarching theme is alienation and concern for the world that youth will inherit."[17] They presented the following among the most common subjects dealt with in the music: environmental issues, the dangers of substance abuse, and corruption in government. The same

authors interviewed Geoff Tate of the heavy metal band Queensryche and offered his comments to further support the importance of lyrics and ideas in heavy metal music:

> [A]bout a year into the [lst] tour people I'd meet backstage who had really listened to the record and already had an interest in politics started to get into it more . . .[I]t effected them in that it made them curious about things and it made them read books and look into it, maybe watch the news for the first time to find out what was going on. [18]

More recently, heavy metal has developed some sub-genres of its own which further complicates the attempt to define the music. Neo-metal seems to be the direction taken by some groups, and the result is a more mainstream sound, conducive to radio airplay. Rudy Sarro of Quiet Riot: "We're melodic. We play melodic songs very loud.'"[19] Herman Rarebell of The Scorpions: "'We have melody and not just hard, crashing, rattling guitars all the time.'"[20]

"Thrash," "speed," "black," "Satanic," and "death" metal have developed also as other sub-genres. Acoustically and lyrically they are heavier and more violent than those descriptions noted above, in the sense that their words and phrases involve violence, horror, and death. Gencarelli evolved his heavy metal discussion into an exploration of the death metal selections:

> They are filled with dire, negative imagery: death, destruction, despair, pain, war, nuclear holocaust, and just plain gore. . . . You really can't expect the lyrics to this music to be about much else. . . . The juxtaposition simply wouldn't make sense.[21]

The literature is full of inconsistences and presented immediate questions: How does the record buying public, specifically those in the stereotypic metal fan age demographic, conceptualize metal? Are dimensions of definition provided by critics and scholars confirmed, or are they stereotypical to the point of missing some of the allure of the genre? Do fans and non-fans define it in the same way?

In an attempt to provide preliminary answers to the above questions, this author submitted written questionnaires to 645 junior high students, 36 high school students, and 77 college undergraduates. (A copy of the questionnaire is included as Appendix A.) As a follow up, personal interviews were conducted with 7 high school students and 15 of the college sample. The written questionnaire served as the basis for the interviews, but probes and follow-ups were used to ascertain additional detail. In addition to assessing definitional aspects of heavy metal music, the surveys provided the means for broadening the exploration. Questions also addressed perceived differences between those that liked the music and those that did not and preliminary gratifications associated with its use.

In some respects, explanations of heavy metal music offered earlier were confirmed by the respondents. The majority of the youth questioned (112 out of 177) identified it as loud or distorted and relying heavily on screaming guitars and screaming vocals (93). Fast was an important part of the description for 34 respondents, and some reference was made to the beat or bass or sound as being "heavy," "hard," or "harsh" by 21 people. The stereotypical reference to heavy metal as head banging music showed up among numerous responses (14) with the indication that heavy metal "has no beat to dance to, but rather requires that you just bang your head on a wall." Little comment was offered regarding subgenres of heavy metal. Seven respondents mentioned "thrash" or "Thrashing" in their descriptions, but, even in the personal interviews, this sample seemed largely unable to make clear distinctions between different types of heavy metal, except in referenced to specific groups. Without specific statistical manipulation, there seemed no substantial difference between respondents in junior high, high school, or college in their conception of heavy metal music.

There was a substantial difference, however, in the explanation of heavy metal music from those who liked it vs. those who did not or those who expressed a neutrality toward it. From the sample of 177, only 18 (eight junior high, 6 high school, 4 college) indicated that they liked heavy metal. However, those that did offered additional insights into the genre. Junior high respondents who liked it characterized it by saying, "it rocks," "exciting," "different," and "fun." One junior high respondent said he liked the lyrics. At the high school and college level, lyrics (in combination with loudness and screaming guitars) represented the factor

most important as a distinguishing characteristic of the genre. "Lyrics have meaning (usually, social, sometimes political)." "They [specifically referring to Iron Maiden] sing about the plight of the American Indian and history." Metallica, for one, addresses "mentally stimulating subjects like governmental corruption and drug abuse." "heavy metal performers care about lyrics (sometimes social statements or just for fun)." "Heavy metal has songs with meaning."

Two factors make the above comments especially noteworthy. First, a majority of respondents (44) who expressed a dislike for the music said the inability to hear or understand lyrics represented part of the definition of heavy metal music. Second, many of the same people that said they could not hear or understand the lyrics said they disliked particular heavy metal groups because they play "Satanic, bad music"; "They are satanic"; "they sound satanic"; "their lyrics are horrible"; and one respondent, in identifying Judas Priest as a group that she especially disliked, said the reason for her abhorrence was the "you can't understand their words, and they support satan." Probing failed to provide real clarification for the seeming contradiction, except that the stereotype of heavy metal most likely influenced the perceptions of it. Indeed, stereotyping of the genre seems particularly likely here and represents a major limitation of the sample in that all of the respondents were drawn from mainstream school systems in a societally conservative area of the country. Fort Collins, Colorado, is rarely (never?) mentioned as being on the cutting edge of liberal music trends, even though there is a progressive rock station that ranks number one with the college audience in the city, and the public radio station does air from midnight to 2 AM nightly a program called "Radio Zero" which is definitely alternative music. The stereotyping potential may be particularly relevant, if not to the definition, at least to the discussion involving the genre.

Another question asked people to distinguish between heavy metal and hard rock. Heavy metal fans offered: "heavy metal performers care about lyrics whereas hard rock performers care only about make-up, women, and money." "Metal performers emphasize their music where hard rock performers emphasize their looks and reputations." "Hard rockers look neater." "Hard rock is commercialized." In this distinction, anti-heavy metalists made similar comments except without reference to lyrics and meanings. "Heavy metal is ruder, cruder, and the image of the performs is dirty." "hard rock is more polished.' "Hard rock performers

try for more sex appeal." "Hard rock has a more clearly defined beat." "Heavy metal is louder." "You can understand the words in hard rock."

In personal interviews, four different people said the difference between heavy metal and hard rock depends on how you define them. When asked if they would define them in their own way, they offered definition by example, noting that Iron Maiden, Grim Reaper, Anthrax, and Metallica were definitely metal, but Rush was not heavy metal; neither were Loverboy or Supertramp. Bon Jovi depends, and so do KISS and AC/DC.

Respondents offered few non-solicited insights on showmanship as a delineating factor of heavy metal. Instead, they offered that it was as important to hard-rockers. In virtually all of the heavy metal genres, long hair seems a prerequisite and pretension is abhorred. Further, in its anti-societal simplicity, shirts with grotesque artwork seem part of the definition[22] as does the grotesque artwork on album/CD covers. But to both heavy metal artists and hard rockers, image was important.

Elements of the original explanation from the Verden, Dunleavy, and Powers work seem to be strengthened by the responses offered by the current sample. However, the factors involving lyrics and content themes continue to confound the issue. Within the universal factor of loudness, this study suggests that other defining factors of heavy metal depend on whether one likes it (and perhaps understands it) or not.

For whatever reason, heavy metal has become an important musical genre. Jonathon S. Epstein and David J. Pratto in setting up their examination of the relationship of heavy metal and adolescent delinquency summarized:

> On the average Heavy Metal records have accounted for 20% of *Rolling Stone* magazine's 'Top Fifty Albums' charts in 1989 and have outsold all other genres combines.[23]

An historical review of the music, including a discussion of its presence on MTV, explains its rise to the mainstream.

Most music historians trace the origins of heavy metal to the late 60s as one of the styles that splintered off rock 'n roll in the 70s. Led Zeppelin is generally considered one of the early influences in the genre. Parke Puterbaugh, in his review of top albums for the 70s, noted that Led Zeppelin's album "In Through the out Door" was number sixteen in the

amount of time at Number One on the *Billboard* albums charts for the decade.[24] Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, UFO, and even KISS were other groups that contributed to the metal attractions of the 70s. Despite some commercial success, especially in album sales, heavy metal remained largely an anti-status quo underground phenomenon until the early 80s, when, in a reaction to punk rock, metal artists and fans reincarnated an "attitude" and took on references of optimism instead of destruction. Pop-music critic J.D. Considine summarized the phenomenon in his expose of heavy metal for *Rolling Stone*:

> Sure, life sucked, the music seemed to say, but that's not the whole story. Above all, metal reminded its listeners that, good times, or bad, the bands and the fans were all in it together . . . a comforting solidarity in the face of adolescent alienation and middle-class ennui.[25]

The optimism evolved into feelings of dislocation, terror, and excitement: " . . . that heavy metal not only spoke to the simmering discontent its listeners felt but provided an alternative source of personal pride and cultural identity."[26]

Throughout the 80s the genre became more mainstream. According to Considine, "radio deserves some of the credit for bringing the music's kick-ass attitude into the mainstream . . .; likewise, MTV lent this music new urgency."[27] Indeed, in a recent telephone survey conducted by *Radio and Records*, MTV ranked first among metal-lovers as the source from which they learned about new heavy metal bands.[28] The match between heavy metal and music television seems a particularly good one. To the extent that looks, showmanship, and attitude reflect key components of heavy metal, it is to the same extent that television should be a positive correlate. These dimensions could be captured on the video medium.

Therefore, considering groups that are loud with a heavy reliance on guitar and attitude/irreverence in performance, and/or considering groups referenced in any issued of *Billboard* or *Radio and Records* as heavy metal, this author identified their presence on the *Billboard* Top 100 singles charts and the *Billboard* Pop Album charts, specifically the first *Billboard* issue in January and the first issue in July for the years 1982 through 1988. Beginning in 1983, when MTV playlists were available, the presence of

metal artist were also sought there. (See Appendix B for a list of those artists identified here as heavy metal for the discussion below.)

In January, 1982, five months after the debut of MTV, no heavy metal group appeared in the top 40 singles chart, and only KISS appeared in the top 100. On the album chart, Ozzy Osbourne and Black Sabbath were both in the top 40, and 7 other metal groups appeared in the top 100, with AC/DC charting three different albums, including "For Those About to Rock" at number 1. In the following two years, MTV initiated "Heavy Metal Heroes," and by January, 1984, five metal groups were in the regular MTV rotation. Still, the presence of such groups had not increased in the charts (three metal singles in the top 100; 7 albums in the top 100). Denisoff affirmed that later in 1984 only three metal groups appeared in the top 30.[29] However, Denisoff also pointed out that about this time metal groups were changing, and he chose to call the new, more mainstream music of the heavy metal groups as neo-metal. He quoted Robin Crosby of Ratt:

> Old heavy metal is boring, I know because we used to be into it. But we dropped that heavy-metal look and all the bondage gear. What we're really after is a mass audience.[30]

Denisoff identified other groups as moving in the same direction. That audiences might have recognized the change as mass appeal seems to be confirmed in the charts in 1986, 1987, and 1988. Metal (perhaps some or all of which could better be called neo-metal) became an important component of MTV. The Scorpions, RATT, Grim Reaper, Twisted Sister, Bon Jovi, Motley Crue, Cinderella, Iron Maiden, Poison, Quiet Riot, Megadeth, W.A.S.P., and Stryper were among the groups that were in rotation. "Head Bangers Ball" became a regular programming component of MTV, and "Dial-MTV" always featured metal groups as predominant. This metal prominence of MTV was matched to some extent by popular chart performance of the metal groups, at least in the albums chart. In fact, on June 13, 1987, five of the top 6 albums were by metal bands, including Motley Crue which debuted that week at number 5.

Billboard columnists identified a record dollar volume for the record industry in 1987,[31] but pointed out that only heavy metal and country

recorded gains in gold and platinum record certifications.[32] Extending to video,

> Heavy metal is one of the few retail success stories for music video. . . . 'Heavy metal is by far the most consistent and quickest-selling video music category.[33]

By July 2, 1988, 11 singles by metal groups and 14 albums were in the top 100. As reported in *Billboard*, Def Leppard's "Hysteria" topped 8 million in U.S. Sales in November, 1988. In the same month, Bon Jovi had the first metal album certified gold, platinum, double platinum, and triple platinum simultaneously. Aerosmith, Poison, and Cinderella all had certified multiplatinum albums, and Megadeth certified gold.[34] During the same month, 15 of 76 selections in regular MTV rotation were heavy metal. *Radio and Records* reported an unprecedented 9 metal albums in the top 80 of the 80s.[35] Outwardly, the correlation between MTV airplay of heavy metal and the chart performance (and record sales) of the genre seems quite strong. It may be that MTV's strongest influence on the music of the 80s was not revitalizing the record industry, but perhaps in mainstreaming particular genres, of which heavy metal is one.

With the popularity came the criticism. The PMRC was most vocal in assailing music lyrics and targeting heavy metal. The resulting voluntary music labeling has subdued the protest, but the evidence has not to this point warranted the criticism, except as a result of anecdotal references and isolated incidences. Results have been inconsistent in the determination of how well adolescents recall lyrics, whether or not lyrics are considered an important reason for liking a selection, and whether or not they influence behavior.[36] In their analysis of music and juvenile delinquency, Verden, Dunleavy, and Powers concluded:

> the findings support an interpretation of the function of popular music in relation to its audience(s) best described as a process similar to the two-step flow model . . . wherein national and inter-national performers convey images, styles, role and cultural norms through the media. These are, in turn, selectively received and interpreted by various taste publics in ways that are congruent with ongoing group norms, ideolo-

gies and myths. This process is capable of producing impressions of youth as well as expressions of youth. A confusion of one for the other does not serve reason. It invites mania.[37]

One cannot help but wonder if the cause of concern for the protestors (and people who do not like the genre) is the attitude reflected by performance or the stereotype read into a group's message from those who say they cannot understand the words.

The historical development of heavy metal music has addressed its increasing popularity and its detractors. Still, the question remains as to who likes it and why. The final area of discussion in this work reviews and expands on the heavy metal audience. Denisoff concludes that "MTV's exposure of neo-heavy metal bands has appeal to a white-male, under-21 demographic. .... especially to frustrated male working class rage."[38] The core audience for heavy metal is working class whites—a constituency that is "typically not given much credit for being able to tell the difference between the dramatic situation in a song and the realities of their own lives."[39] Middle school students outside the mainstream in North Carolina "without exception" chose heavy metal music in their activity time.[40] For students in a non-traditional high school and those designated as emotionally/behaviorally disturbed, "the musical format they preferred to listen to was 'heavy metal.'"[41] Wells and Hakanen noted the lack of middle ground concerning attitude about heavy metal. They ranked it as the second most popular music genre among adolescents (behind "rock") but also ranked it as the second most disliked genre (behind "new wave").[42]

Of the 177 respondents in this study, 18 really liked it, 49 were neutral, and 110 really disliked it. Four of those who really liked it were college undergrads, three of those four were female, and three of the four at GPAs above 3.3. Out of the 14 junior high and high school students who said they liked heavy metal, 11 were male. Seven had GPAs above 3.0.

When asked to identify someone that they know that liked heavy metal and to provide information about that person, the following profile emerged: male, 17 years old, average (or a little above) as a student, knowledgeable about music, and tending to spend a lot more time listening to music than most people, perhaps even to the exclusion of social activity. This question was not asked to junior high respondents.

But, of the 36 high schoolers, 22 offered answers, and 19 of them said males, while of the 77 college students, 61 answered and 54 of them said male. In all cases, the fan identified was between the ages of 13 and 24. Not all respondents offered that the metal fan was a good student. Indeed, the student dimension of this answer ran the gamut from "my brother who dropped out of school in ninth grade" to a "fraternity brother who is member of the National Honor Society with a GPA of near 4.0." However, in contrast to much stereotype, the metal fans are not necessarily poor students. In addition, nine were characterized as "closet bangers," who do not represent the stereotypical heavy metal image in their day-to-day rituals of dress and behavior.

Virtually everyone identified as a heavy metal fan was also identified as a person who spends a lot of time with music. In many cases, the reference was made to the fan as a person who plays an instrument or understands music to the point of being more involved with intricate analysis of it, even to the point of excluding themselves from other social activity. Numerous studies have identified the role of music in the socialization process, concluding among other things that music similarities serve as the bases of friendships and shared values.[43] One surface implication of the current results is that heavy metal music might form for the anti-social or introverted personality the substitute for friendship. It also seems plausible that it serves for its fans as a source of values and social learning. These areas deserve additional study as they involve all genres of music, but, to the extent that the above profile of the metal lover is correct, particularly for heavy metal. In at least a vague way, the current results point to more consideration of ethnographic approaches to research in the area and a renewed consideration for accommodation theory and social action perspectives.[44]

The current analysis of the definition, the historical development, and the audience of heavy metal (despite its limitations of sample and its exploratory ramblings) suggests that rebellion and categorizations of counter-cultural hedonism or satanism associated with the music are too simplistic or even irrelevant. Indeed, its roles as a positive *and* negative variable in socialization and as a victim of, in addition to a villain in, stereotyping seem especially fruitful for additional analyses. Textual analyses of lyrical messages and themes in different heavy metal selections seems imperative. Comparisons of musical preferences, uses, and life characteristics among youth in their developmental stages might also

be useful. And an assessment of content and other differences and similarities in heavy metal and neo-metal would seem valuable for historical purposes, and for discerning whether or not these differences impacted selection for radio playlists.

Unfortunately, the current work has raised more questions than it has answered. Hopefully, the assimilation of old and new information, albeit some of it contradictory, can serve to stimulate more systematic inquiry.

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Much recent controversy has centered on music, music lyrics, and the effect of music on people, especially young people. One of the genres of music getting mostly negative comment is "heavy metal" music. However, it seems that there is major difficulty in defining heavy metal and in determining who really likes it and listens to it. By answering the following questions, you can be a major help in clarifying perceptions regarding heavy metal music. Thank you for your time and for the honest answers to the following questions.

1. How would you define/describe "heavy metal" music?

2. What is the difference between heavy metal music and hard rock?

3. Name a heavy metal artist/group.

4. What is the difference between heavy metal performers and hard rock performers?

5. Think of someone you know (it could be yourself) who likes/listens to heavy metal. Tell me about that person: age; sex; occupation/student; good student/not so good student; likes/dislikes; plays musical instrument; etc. If you don't know anyone who likes heavy metal, leave this answer blank.

6. Circle the number below that best describes your personal attitude toward heavy metal music in general:

Hate It			Neutral			Love It
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. Is there one heavy metal artist/group that you especially like? Who? Why?

8. Is there one heavy metal artist/group that you especially dislike? Who? Why?

9. Your anonymity will always be maintained. However, it is often helpful to be able to analyze answers with consideration for different groupings of people. If you are comfortable in doing so, please tell me a couple of things about yourself:

A. Age _____

B. Sex _____

C. Hometown _____

D. Grade point average _____

E. Year in school _____

Appendix B

Heavy Metal Groups Appearing in Charts and Video Playlists

AC/DC
Aerosmith
Alice Cooper
Anthrax
Billy Idol
Black Sabbath
Bon Jovi
Cinderella
Def Leppard
Dokken
Grim Reaper
Guns and Roses
Iron Maiden
Judas Priest
Kick Axe
KISS
Krokus
Led Zeppelin
Megadeth
Metallica
Molly Hatchet
Motley Crue
Ozzy Osbourne
Poison
Queensryche
Quiet Riot
RATT
Scorpions
Slayer
Stryper
Tesla
Twisted Sister
Uriah Heep
Van Halen
W.A.S.P.
White Lion
Whitesnake

Notes

[1] Dave DiMartino, "Decalog," *Billboard* (December 23, 1989), D-8.

[2] R. Serge Denisoff, *Inside MTV* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1989), 2; Lenny Beer, "On Records," *HITS* (January 26, 2989),12, "A Year for Records," *Fortune* (April 1, 1985), 10.

[3] Dennis D. Phillips and Tim Schlattmann, "Strip Mining for Gold and Platinum: Record Sales and Chart Performance Pre- and Post-MTV," *Popular Music and Society* (Spring, 1990), 85-95.

[4] Tim Schlattmann and Dennis D. Phillips, "MTV and the New Artist: Bullet, Breaker, or Bust," Paper presented to Popular Culture Association Conference, Toronto, Canada, March, 1990; currently in press for *Popular Music and Society.*

[5] Paul Grein, "The Decade in Charts," *Billboard* (December 23, 1989), D-6.

[6] Jim Bessman, "Heavy Metal Video Sales Gain," *Billboard* (January 10, 1987), 38-39.

[7] Jonathon S. Epstein and David J. Pratto, "Heavy Metal Rock Music Juvenile Delinquency and Satanic Identification," *Popular Music and Society* (Winter, 1990), 67.

[8] R. Serge Denisoff, *Tarnished Gold: The Record Industry Revisited* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1986), 23.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Paul Verden, Kathleen Dunleavy, and Charles H. Powers, "Heavy Metal Mania and Adolescent Delinquency," *Popular Music and Society* (Spring, 1989), 73-82.

[11] Thom Gencarelli, "'Notes From the Underground': The 'Death' Metal Audience as Interpretive Community," Paper presented to the Popular Culture Association Conference, Toronto, Canada, March, 1990.

[12] David Gans, "Twisted Logic (I'd Sat Severely Bent)," *Record* (December 1984), 37.

[13] Anthony DeCurtis, "The Eighties," *Rolling Stone* (November 15, 1990), 62.

[14] Richard Corliss, "X Rated," *Time* (May 7, 1990), 94.

[15] Marc Eliot, *Rockonomics* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1989), 247-248.

[16] J. D. Considine, "Metal Mania," *Rolling Stone* (November 15, 1990), 104.

[17] Epstein and Pratto, 74.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Denisoff, *Gold*, 443.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Gencarelli, 10.

[22] Ibid., 11.

[23] Epstein and Pratto, 67.

[24] Parke Puterbaugh, "The Top 25 Albums of the '70s," *Rolling Stone* (September 20, 1990), insert.

[25] Considine, 104.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 103.

[28] "Metal Fatigue," *Radio and Records* (January 22, 1990).

[29] Denisoff, *Gold*, 443.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Irv Lichtman, "'87 Unit Sales Best in Decade," *Billboard*, (April 30, 1988), 1, 76.

[32] Paul Grein, "Gold, Platinum in Downturn," *Billboard* (July 11, 1987), 1, 77.

[33] Bessman, 39.

[34] Paul Grein, "Nov. Good Month for Metal, Debuts," *Billboard* (December 10, 1988), 5, 81.

[35] "AOR Albums," *Radio and Records* (January 5, 1990), 40.

[36] See for example: John P. Robinson and Paul Hirsch, "Teenage Response to Rock and Roll Proteste Songs," and R. Serge Denisoff and Mark Levine, "Brainwashing or Background Noise: The Popular Protest Song," both in *The Sounds of Social Change: Studies in Popular Culture* (eds.) R. Serge Denisoff and R. Peterson (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972); Jill Rosenbaum and Lorraine Prinsky, "Leer-ics' or Lyrics, Teenage

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[37] Verden, Dunleavy, and Powers, 81.

[38] Denisoff, *Gold*, 442.

[39] DeCurtis, 62.

[40] Epstein and Pratto, 71.

[41] Schlattmann, 26.

[42] Ernest A. Hakanen and Alan Wells, "Adolescent Music Marginals: Who Likes Metal, Jazz, Country, and Classical," *Popular Music and Society* (Winter, 1990), 57-66.

[43] See for example: Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock and Roll* (New York: Pantheon, 1981); James Lull (ed.), *Popular Music and Communication* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987); James S. Leming, "Rock Music and the Socialization of Moral Values in Early Adolescence," *Youth & Society* (June, 1987), 363-383; Donna Rouner, "Rock Music Use as a Socializing Function," *Popular Music and Society* (Spring, 1990), 97-107.

[44] For detailed explanation, see James A. Anderson and Timothy P. Meyer, *Mediated Communication: A Social Action Perspective.* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988).

Cultural Politics/The Politics of Culture: Using Foucault and Habermas to Locate Prospects for Social Change

by

J. Craig Hanks

The recent history and present state of our world demands that we consider the nature and character of political change and its relationship to cultural production. What sorts of cultural productions present possibilities for human liberation and what sorts are useful for maintaining existing power relations? Is it correct, as some technological determinists suggest, that utopia (or the revolution) is just around the corner? The suggestion being that if we can only wait the inexorable advance of technological innovation will lead us there.[1] Or, as some pessimists argue, is every seeming technological and cultural advance merely a tightening of what Max Weber identified as the iron cage of society?

A brief litany of recent world events might include the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the elections of Islamic fundamentalists in Algeria, the Persian Gulf Wars, years of labour unrest in South Korean, civil wars in much of Central America, and the reunification of Germany. Or, an alternative list: a resurgent sense of African-American identity, the rising popularity of Rap, the struggle over multi-cultural education, the canon debate, and continuing efforts by the Left and the Right to ban "offensive" books, movies, etc.

Many of these events seem to be driven by a desire for self-determination and self-expression both cultural and political. Unless we wish to live in willful ignorance of ourselves, our world and the implications of these events, we must find ways to think about the direction and origins of cultural and political change. And, unless we wish to be passively swept along by these events, we need to have more than a descriptive account of what is going on.

Social theory attempts to provide an account of some social or cultural phenomenon—an explanation of why something is the way it is. If the account is more than just descriptive, that is, if the theory is what we might call critical social theory, then a stand is taken on the desirability of the situation described. Critical social theory not only aids our understanding of our situation, but it does so with attention to the possibilities that things might be otherwise. Critical social theory must aim at making things better. In a 1984 interview Jurgen Habermas explains his conception of a critical social theory,

> I can not imagine any seriously critical social theory without an internal link to something like an emancipatory interest.

> That is such a big name! But what I mean is an attitude which is formed in the experience of suffering from something man-made, which can be abolished and should be abolished.[2]

During the course of his intellectual production Habermas has moved from a version of ideology critique to a criticism of social reification. Or, from an attempt to provide a grounding of a critical social theory in "quasi-transcendental" structures of human interests[3] to an account of the colonization of a linguistically based lifeworld by an instrumentally oriented social system through the media of power and money. In naming this move Habermas is paralleling moves in Anglo-American and French philosophy from the paradigm of consciousness to the paradigm of language.

A primary motivation for this move is the growing critique of the philosophy of consciousness with its origin in the works of Freud, Heidegger and Neitzsche. The critique of the philosophy of consciousness is, in part, a rejection of the project of the Enlightenment. According to the critics the emphasis on abstract rationality and individual autonomy which characterizes Enlightenment thought, is inextricably entwined with modern forms of domination.[4] On this account of our culture, whatever liberatory spaces are opened up by the use of reason or the construction of new technologies are bound to be coopted or appropriated by forces which do not aim at human freedom.

Habermas' goal, especially in *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984 & 1987), is to reconstruct the Enlightenment project. Toward that end, Habermas offers us a two level theory of society utilizing both lifeworld and social system perspectives and develops a new critical social theory which describes and explains the pathologies of modern society while still retaining the emancipatory content of certain Enlightenment ideals. About the lifeworld Habermas says,

> Members of a collective normally share a life-world. In communication, but also in the process of cognition, this only exists in the distinctive, pre-reflexive form of background assumptions, background receptives, or background relations. The lifeworld is that remarkable thing which dissolves and disappears before our eyes as soon as we try to take it up piece by piece.[5]

On Habermas' account the lifeworld is the unthematized background of meanings against which particular events occur. Habermas integrates three different existing approaches into his account of the lifeworld: i) the phenomenological with its emphasis on the production and reproduction of cultural knowledge, ii) the social systems approach with its focus on the role of institutions and social integration, and iii) symbolic interactionism with its emphasis on the role of socialization and the lifeworld as a ground for the formation of personality, for individual growth and action. By combining these three Habermas arrives at a description of the lifeworld as a preexisting stock of knowledge handed down in culture and language. Under conditions of modernity the lifeworld becomes rationalized. That is, the lifeworld possesses linguistic structures that allow the differentiation of objective, social and subjective domains of reference.[6]

Every action includes a complex set of objective facts, social norms, and personal experiences. Depending upon the situation some of these conditions will emerge from and some will fade into the lifeworld. These actions/events are unified into a life history through narratives, through communicative action.[7]

Habermas identifies three dimensions of communicative rationality, not surprisingly they correspond to the three domains/viewpoints with in the lifeworld. They are: first, the knowing subject and its relation to the world of events; second, the acting practical subject in its relation to a social world; third, the suffering passionate subject in its relation to its own and others subjectivity.[8] It is through these communicatively structured relations that cultural reproduction, the coordination of social interaction, and socialization take place.[9]

Unlike many of his predecessors (Georg Lukacs and Herbert Marcuse, for example), Habermas argues that the rationalization of the lifeworld, its separation into different spheres of knowledge and action, is a positive result of modernity. The rationalized lifeworld allows the structural differentiation of i) culture from society—this frees normative institutions (such as the courts) from metaphysical or religious world views (at least in theory); and ii) personality from culture—this frees individuals to revise traditions, to participate freely in interpersonal relationships, and to engage in self-conscious self-realization; and iii) form from content—this includes freeing formal procedures of justice from concrete action contexts, and cognitive structures from particular life histo-

ries. The rationalized lifeworld also requires greater reflexivity in decision making. One result of these trends is that specialized disciplines emerge, democratic institutions replace authoritarian institutions, and education "deparochializes."[10]

Habermas draws on the work of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg in order to argue that linguistic evolution and moral-cognitive development parallel social evolution and the rationalization of the lifeworld. At the 'highest' level of moral cognitive development (the postconventional stage), people can evaluate norms from the standpoint of the generalized other (similar to the perspective of one employing the Kantian Categorical Imperative). Communication at this level requires the ability to debate, propose and reject value claims from a universal perspective.[11]

This process leads to the possibility of critical learning and discourse when knowledge claims, normative claims and descriptions of subjective experience can be distinguished from each other in everyday conversation. Finally, expert discourses (politics, science, medicine, law philosophy, ethics, art, theology, and so forth) split off from everyday speech.[12] The process of rationalization constructs persons who are increasingly autonomous with respect to culture, history and tradition. Individuals who demand a greater say in determining the course of their lives. As we shall find, when systemic logics invade the lifeworld, people organize resistance movements.

From the viewpoint internal to the lifeworld, "society is represented as a network of communicatively mediated cooperation. . . . The lifeworld that members construct from common cultural traditions is coextensive with society."[13] However, such a viewpoint is a mistake. It is a mistake not in that it is false, but because it is only partial. If society is equated with lifeworld, then the source of social pathologies and crises remain enigmatic. Furthermore, such an equation requires the acceptance of "three fictions": i) that culture and ordinary language is transparent, ii) that communicative action is characterized by reciprocity and the participants "have to assume that they could, in principle, arrive at an understanding about anything and everything,"[14] and iii)that individuals are fully conscious of their motives.

According to Habermas these fictions are an account of,

> the way things look to the members of the sociocultural lifeworld themselves. In fact, however, their goal directed actions are coordinated not only through processes of reach-

ing understanding, but also through functional interconnections that are not intended by them, and are usually not even perceived within the horizon of everyday practice.[15]

Habermas is claiming that there are forces external to the lifeworld which are the sources of distortion in the communicative action of the lifeworld, sources of social pathologies. These social pathologies include such symptoms of modern life as anomie, neurosis, alienation, the loss of meaning, security and identity provided by being firmly situated in a culture. To understand the sources of these pathologies we must examine the systems of i) economic organization and ii) political and bureaucratic action.

From the systems perspective, society is a self-regulating system. In this system actions are coordinated through the imperatives of means/ends rationality. That is, actions are chosen because of the ways in which their consequences will fit with the consequences of other actions already chosen. From this perspective society is understood in terms of the functional relations of its systems and subsystems as understood from the perspective of an external observer.

Of course, neither the system nor the lifeworld perspective is merely a perspective. Each viewpoint corresponds to something about society. And, though the lifeworld perspective has a certain priority because it is in principle possible that all functions of actions be expressed in the lifeworld structures of communicative action, the importance of the systems approach has been increasing with the increasing complexity of society.[16]

Following Talcott Parsons, Habermas argues that the system and lifeworld are interrelated and looped together in a feedback process. In fact the functions of systemic integration attended to by the system have their origin in the social integration of the lifeworld. The increased rationalization of the lifeworld and the increasing requirements made by the material reproduction of modern society means that the activities of individuals must be increasingly coordinated. In the institutionalization of this coordination a "decoupling of system and lifeworld" occurs.[17]

As the rationalization of the lifeworld progresses in the transition from traditional to modern societies, the greater the chance that disagreements will occur. In traditional societies institutions linked to social integration—such as kinship systems, ritual exchange, and so on—

served to coordinate power and exchange relations. With the fading of consensus about the meaning of many situations came increasing strain on the social structure.[18] To deal with this pressure certain mechanisms of systemic organization were decoupled from the demands of communicative action.[19]

Through a process which Habermas, borrowing from Parsons, calls "value generalization,"[20] areas of life are transferred from the lifeworld to the system. As society becomes more complex, positions of power are detached from kinship systems and annexed to political office. In these increasingly politically stratified societies the justification of power becomes necessary. As we shall examine in what follows, power cannot be legitimated in terms of money. After all, the market is supposedly a place of 'free' and 'equal' exchange where everyone makes what s/he can of, and for, him or himself, being all one can be on the basis of hard work and talent. In such a place, power should be irrelevant. Thus state functions, such as judicial and legislative, become formally organized, codified in a system of formal law. One aspect of these legal arrangements is their guarantee of "free contracts" for private gain. This elevates the market to the status of an autonomous self-regulating system.[21]

In *Legitimation Crisis* (1975), Habermas argues that one of the effects of situating the market as an autonomous sphere within society is to contain class conflict by concealing class exploitation. The transition to bourgeois civil law does maintain law and order, and provide for education, transportation and communication. This transition also leaves the market largely untouched, largely free from regulation. The market then relieves the political order of the need for legitimation because the conditions of freedom are now found in the market where the exchange of 'equivalents' and the 'voluntary' nature of wage relations hide exploitation.[22]

Habermas revises this theory in *The Theory of Communicative Action* and introduces the notion of the steering medium. Just as money is the steering medium by which market decisions are coordinated, so to are administrative/political systems integrated through the "non-normative steering of subjectively uncoordinated decisions."[23] Habermas explains social distortions by reference to the process whereby the reproduction of everyday life becomes directed by considerations of money and power and not through the communicative interactions of people. He calls this

process the colonization of the lifeworld, when the efficient pursuit of goals which we never debated and choice becomes the point of our lives.

Money functions as a steering medium through the familiar process of comidification. Money converts concrete human labor into an abstract commodity. This process takes place in the exchange relations of the marketplace. Habermas observes that the exchange relation does not obviously disadvantage any participants, because no party willingly enters into an exchange relation not in here or his own interest. For this reason, the market appears to be an autonomous sphere of non-normative activity.

Power is the medium whereby individual decisions are coordinated toward "the realization of collective goals." It is through the medium of power that the actions of administrative bureaucratic structures come to appear as the nature like relations which defined Weber's iron cage. But, Habermas claims, unlike exchange relations, power relations are not obviously in the interest of all parties. Thus, the power relation "needs to be legitimated and therefore requires a more demanding normative anchoring than does money."[24]

Habermas is arguing that although power functions as a steering medium, just as money does, it still requires justification in communicative terms. This is so because of the structure of power relations—powerholders have an advantage over subordinates. Habermas makes this claim based, in part, upon Nilkas Luhman's account in *The Differentiation of Society* (1982). Luhman argues that power is the medium by which modern societies reduce the complexity of decision making. Decisions made by powerholders become the unquestioned basis of decisions by subordinates.[25]

In this account of the structure of power relations in modern society, Habermas may be correct. Yet, it seems quite possible that power has disappeared into the fabric of the system, and the system-lifeworld interaction, just as money has. If this has happened, then power will need no more justification than does money because it (power) will not longer appear as such. In fact, we need only remember the new ideology of business (or government) that "we're all in this together," or the creation of an "us" striding forth to police the world as in many recent military adventures in order to find reason to doubt that his analysis is complete. As evidence of this we find workers' quality circles, or public hearings and committees. All of these devices function to remove political consider-

ations and power relations from the administrative decision process by supposedly including all interested parties in the process. The effect is to remove, or to appear to have removed, hierarchy from the decision making process. Habermas might have missed this because in his account of power he assumes that power is centralized in origin and unidirectional in distribution. Habermas' account of power might benefit from an encounter with the work of Foucault who offers a non-normative analysis of power as capillary, decentralized, and self-policing.

Foucault, like Habermas, claims that modern power as a medium of control and domination had its origins in local, lifeworld concerns. In the late 18th century a variety of "microtechniques" were developed in schools, hospitals and prisons far from the traditional centers of power. Only later would these techniques be utilized in global strategies of domination.[26] In a 1977 interview, Foucault said,

> If you ask me, "Does this new technology of power take its historical origin from an identifiable individual or group of individuals who decide to implement it so as to further their own interests or facilitate their utilization of the social body?" then I would say "No". These tactics were invented and organized from the starting points of local conditions and particular needs.[27]

Foucault characterizes modern power as "disciplinary power" in part because of its origins in disciplinary institutions which first faced the problems of organizing, managing, watching and controlling large numbers of persons. Later these problems would become central problems for modern governments and they would take up the practices developed at the fringes of the old society. Previously power had its location in the person of the sovereign. By contrast, modern power "has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which the individuals are caught up."[28]

One of the disciplinary practices which Foucault discusses is "the gaze." The gaze allows administrators to manage their institutions by organizing the populations so that they could be watched, known, and

controlled. This watching took place on two levels and required constructing two new objects of knowledge—the social group and the individual.

In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1975), Foucault recounts the origin of the "medical gaze." This gaze was made possible by the intersection of i) the construction of the individual as a "case" and the new types of detailed observation made possible by the bedside observation in modern hospitals; with ii) the arrangements and segregation of patients in accord with the types of diseases (witness many proposals for dealing with PWAIDS) and systems of monitoring health at the state level which though semi-autonomous (AMA) are centralized authorities "for the recording and assessment of all medical activity."[29]

Twelve years later when *Discipline and Punish* (1979) first appears in France we find Foucault once again taking up "the gaze." In this text his central example of the creation of a modern "economy of power" is Betham's Panopticon. The Panopticon is a model for prison design consisting of rings of backlit cells surrounding a central elevated watch-tower. This design allows a single guard to oversee many inmates and provides a single objective view of the members of prison society and their relations. Because the cells are backlit, the inmates can not tell when they are being observed, how many observers there are, nor even if they are ever being watched. The effect is to create self-policing prisoners. Foucault observes,

> The efficiency of power, its constraining force have, in a sense, passed over to the other side—to the side of its surface of application. He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows, it assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.[30]

What happens is that the prisoners internalize the gaze and police their own behavior. Throughout modern institutions, in hospitals, prisons, factories, schools, this type of observation objectifies its targets and invades their lives.

With the rise of modern societies comes the "necessity to ensure the circulation of effects of power through progressively finer channels, gaining access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures and all their daily actions."[31] Disciplinary power is always already everywhere; it is in us, in our desires, our habits, our bodies. Modern power is, in Foucault's words, capillary. Furthermore, it is "self-amplifying," it aims not at suppression but at the reconstruction of its objects.

My intention is to evaluate the theories of Habermas and Foucault by determining how well they fulfill the demands of a critical social theory. Do these accounts distinguish more and less desirable forms of social practice? Do they identify forms of social domination? Do they identify the most likely and productive forms of social action? In order to answer these questions I must briefly turn to the political implications of these theories.

Both Habermas and Foucault agree that just as modern power has its origin in local necessities, so too must resistance. Habermas identifies what he calls "new social movements" (environmentalism, religious fundamentalism, feminism. . . .) and Foucault valorizes "micro politics."

Habermas believes that the separation of system and lifeworld, and the rationalization of the lifeworld are ambivalent developments of modern societies. There have been significant gains in freedom, and social programs are a significant advance in the humaneness of our society. Yet, the mechanisms by which these gains are realized threatens the increased freedom. The increased intervention of public welfare and legal systems into everyday life has pathological results. Such 'reforms' require that symbolic reproduction functions be subordinated to system integration mechanisms, economic and administrative imperatives increasingly have priority over the values and goals of the lifeworld. These interventions and disruptions of the communicatively organized symbolic reproduction of everyday life threaten personal and collective identities and social crises develop.[32]

In response to this "colonization of the lifeworld," "new social movements" emerge. These movements challenge the crises in symbolic reproduction. For example: they challenge the instrumentalization of education, the commercialization of relationships and life-styles, bureaucratization and legalization of services, and the routinization of

politics.[33] Some of these new social movements, such as religious fundamentalism are reactionary in their demand for an earlier stage of social integration. Some movements, such as the ecology movement, are better because they struggle to resist the demands of the system and create new broadly democratic mechanisms of control over the system (We have, of course, seen much of the radical economic and political import of the environmental movement dissipate in an attempt to convince people that environmentalism requires no changes in daily life and no structural challenges to the system.)

Habermas' account of the politics of the new social movements is based, in part, on his account of power. For this reason we find that the sites for struggle occur at the interstices of system and lifeworld, that collectivities within the lifeworld resist the invasion of power into the symbolic reproduction of everyday life.

If Foucault is correct, if power is capillary in character, then power does not flow uni-directionally from the system to the lifeworld. Power is, therefore, as present in aspects of daily life (cooking, choosing which clothes to wear, dating) as it is in system of bureaucratic/administrative organization. This means that Habermas is too quick to locate the system/lifeworld intersection as the site for struggle and resistance. Foucault's account means that a liberatory politics will include (begin with?) a politics of everyday life, a politics of culture. This is, of course, an argument made by many feminists, radical environmentalists, and other members of "new social movements."

If Foucault is correct, then power is decentered and continuous. In fact, power is itself not a unitary notion, power is multiple and encompasses such diverse phenomena as criteria for knowledge claims and the secret and coercive extraction of knowledge from and about persons.

"Power is everywhere" argues Foucault.[34] One claim that follows from this is that we are always already engaged in struggles for the structure and meaning of our daily life. The politics that follows from this claim is a politics structured around single issues and local demands (right to life, or neighborhood politics). These struggles are "micro-politics."

Some forms of micro-political struggle have little, if any, formal organization. One example is the use of contemporary technologies to construct new cultural products. As far back as 1936 Walter Benjamin argued that technological innovation is changing the nature of art and

aesthetic experience. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin argues that,

> [t]he instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice—politics[35]

Traditionally each work of art was unique. The art work had its own existence in time and space as well as its own history. Meeting these conditions, as understood for a specific object, conferred upon that object "authenticity." The (use) value of the authentic work stems from the ritual function it serves. Benjamin points out that this ritualistic origin of artistic value still exists in the secular "cult of beauty."[36] Benjamin has a name for this surrounding value, which is based in ritual and expressed in the valorization of authenticity and uniqueness. This he calls the "aura". It is the death of the aura that distinguishes art in the age of mechanical reproduction.

> In principle a work of art has always been reproducible. Man made artifacts could always be imitated by man .... Mechanical reproduction of a work of art, however, represents something new.[37]

For Benjamin, the preeminent example of art in the age of mechanical reproduction was film. Film offers the opportunity for "simultaneous collective experience." Film is art with no aura, it is readily accessible to all and offers the possibility that any person can be both producer and consumer of cultural products.

In the age of mechanical reproduction (and electronic reproduction) the image of a work of art is no longer unique. John Berger points out that this is because the image can be reproduced and its meaning changed according to its context. In theory, anyone can now give a work of art a new meaning and thereby resist the political and cultural colonization of the lifeworld.

But for the most part, this democratization of the image has not come to pass. Berger argues that,

> Very few people are aware of what has happened because the means of reproduction are used nearly all the time to promote the illusion that nothing has changed except that the masses, thanks to reproduction, can now begin to appreciate art as the cultured minority once did.[38]

Benjamin was right. Reproduction of art objects has destroyed the aura of the art of the past. What matters now is who controls the means of reproduction and toward what end. For the present, control is in the hands of multinational capital. Its technique is to use publicity (e.g., children's commercials, advertising) to create spectator-buyers.

> The purpose of publicity is to make the spectator marginally dissatisfied with his present way of life. Not with the way of life of society, but with his own within it. It suggests that if he buys what it is offering, his life will become better . . . .Publicity turns consumption into a substitute for democracy.[39]

Berger points out that action for structural change seldom occurs. All too often the spectator lapses "into recurrent day-dreams." The art of the past is dead. Publicity and consumption now play the traditional sacred role played by art. They have taken on a pseudo-aura, a pseudo authenticity. The radical transformation some have foreseen as a natural consequence of the new technologies has failed to come about. In order to understand why, we must ask the political question—the question of power— of who would own and control the means of communicating and disseminating images and ideas. As "the entire art of the past has . . .become a political issue,"[40] so has the art of the present.

Today we can rewrite Benjamin's argument and apply it to popular music. It isn't at all clear what it means to say that a performance is "live." Nor is it clear why and how we valorize something called "authentic" performance. Whether it is rap or metal or country, Madonna performing "Express Yourself" or Whitney Houston performing "The Star Spangled Banner" or Public Enemy performing "Fight the Power" or Milli Vanilli performing anything, editing, overdubbing, effects, backtracking, and so on have all been used to construct new products, new music. As Reebee Garofalo notes,

> It isn't that this music is somehow less "authentic" than other musics, its that our feelings about authenticity—like our copyright laws and our theories of culture—have not kept pace with technological advances.[41]

As DAT, writable CDs, and digital effects technologies become increasingly available, the line between producer and consumer of popular music will continue to break down.

If we look about we can find that this is already happening. Many of us make our own recordings from bits of different discs, found sounds, radio, etc. In many countries very few of the copies of recordings of Western Music on the market are "legitimate"[42]. As Constance Penley and Andrew Ross point out in their introduction to *Technoculture* (1991),

> In many countries attempts to enforce Western ideas about copyright and private intellectual property are seen as acts of cultural imperialism or, as postcolonial impertinence. The arrival of technologies, then, is accompanied, as it were, by ideological instructions for their "proper" use that are often in direct contradiction to the obvious practical uses of the technologies. In most cases, the implied instructions, understood as deferring to Western notions of copyright, go unheeded.[43]

In this country Dave Marsh's monthly publication *Rock and Roll Confidential* serves as a clearing house for home taping tips and an organizing tool for resistance to music censorship efforts around the United States. It is only one of many such publications, many of which are published through the use of an employer's computers, photocopy machines and printers.

The uses of recording (and printing) technologies in this manner are acts of everyday rebellion, acts of decolonization. However, so long as the acts, and the actors, remain disconnected and reactive, they will never challenge fundamental structures and existing power relations. The trick is to avoid dependency on technological innovation driven by "free" market imperatives and to construct political and technological countercultures.

One of the problems with Foucault's account of power and resistance is the claim that we are always already engaged in power relations which cannot, in the final instance, be transformed. He claims,

> There aren't immediately given subjects of the struggle. . . . Who fights against whom? We all fight each other. And there is always within each of us something that fights something else.[44]

If he is correct, then it is not clear what form will be taken by any effective cultural or political struggle. That is, any struggle not always already doomed to fail. Thus, we are left with a politics characterized by Nancy Fraser as a politics "of multiple local resistances carried out in the name of no articulable positive ideal."[45] Such a politics doesn't, in spite of Foucault's claims to the contrary,[46] doesn't offer much hope for systemic change.

This is the crucial difference between Habermas' account of power and Foucault's account. For Foucault power is non-normative and everywhere, so how is it possible to resist? But, as Habermas notes, the questions raised by Foucault's account go even deeper:

> If it is just a matter of mobilizing counterpower, of strategic battles and wily confrontations, why should we muster any resistance at all against this all-pervasive power circulating in the bloodstream of the body of modern society, instead of just adopting ourselves to it? . . . why fight at all?[47]

The primary problem of politics and culture in the last days of the 20th century is the problem of coalitions. At some level both Habermas' account of new social movements and Foucault's account of micropolitics are accurate accounts of the actually existing politics, especially in what we might call the core countries of late, or postmodern, capitalism.[48]

If the colonization of the lifeworld is a systematic matter, and neither Habermas nor Foucault give us any reason to believe otherwise, then systemic changes are necessary. And though his account neither takes account of the fact that struggle is always underway, nor of the necessity of struggles within the lifeworld; Habermas does talk about the possibil-

ity of change at the level of the social whole. That is, Habermas continues to think the totality. This is necessary because,

> We cannot but live in a total world. The world constitutes a totality—inevitable—in the background of our everyday activities. Now the problem is whether one can employ a theoretical language to analyze a concrete lifeworld, as a particular totality, or whether one refrains from that claim and restricts oneself to an analysis of the presumably universal infrastructure which all lifeworlds share with each other. It is this infrastructure that I'm interested in.[49]

Locating a theory of power within an account of a social totality is important because such talk opens the possibility for parties in different social locations to understand what they have in common, why they should build coalitions to accomplish structural systemic change, and in whose name the struggle should take place—our own.

Notes

[1] One example of this sort of naive optimism about the beneficial affects of technological innovation is the work of Marshall McLuhan. See Craig Hanks, "Baudrillard and McLuhan: The Media as Agents of Social Change," in *Left Without Ground: Radical Possibilities of Postmodernity*, ed. Bill Martin and George Trey [Washington, D.C.: Maisonneuve Press, forthcoming].

[2] Jurgen Habermas, *Autonomy and Solidarity*, [London: Verson, 1986], p. 198.

[3] See Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, [Boston: Beacon Press, 1971].

[4] See max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, [New York: Continuum, 1987]. On the general crisis of any grand explanatory and nustificatory narratives, including the narrative of reason, see Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984]. For a clear concise account of the Enlightenment project see Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment," in *Kant: Selection*, ed. Lewis White Beck, [New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1988].

[5] Habermas, *A&S*, p. 109.

[6] Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol., 2 [Boston: Beacon Press, 1987], pp. 119-140. For the sources of the Habermasian account of the lifeworld see: i) for the phenomenological, Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols. [Tubingen: J.C. Mohr, 1980], ii) for social systems account, Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, [New York: Free Press, 1951], and *Action Theory and the Human Condition*, [New York: Free Press, 1978], and Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, [New York: Free Press, 1933], and iii) for symbolic interactionism see George Herbert Mead, *On Social Psychology*, ed. Anselm Strauss, [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964].

[7] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, pp. 143-145.

[8] Habermas, *A&S*, pp. 108-109.

[9] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, pp. 143-145.

[10] *TCA*, Vol. 2, pp. 145-148. See also Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1, [Boston: Beacon Press, 1984], pp. 157-158.

[11] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2. pp. 27-42. Many objections have been raised to Kohlberg's account of moral-cognitive development. Along with these objections have come criticisms of Habermas' use of Kohlberg's theory. See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982]. Also Seyla Benhabib, "The Generalized and the Concrete Other: The Kohlberg-Gilligan Controversy and Feminist Theory," in *Feminism and Critique: On the Politics of Gender*, ed. Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell, [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987].

[12] Habermas, *TCA*, vol, 2, pp. 77-118.

[13] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, pp. 148-149.

[14] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, p. 150.

[15] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, p. 150.

[16] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, p. 172-178.

[17] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, p. 153.

[18] This process was traced in great detail by Jurgen Habermas in *Legitimation Crisis*, [Boston: Beacon Press, 1975].

[19] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, p. 153-165.

[20] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, p. 179.

[21] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, pp. 168-173.

[22] Habermas, *LC*, pp. 19-23.

[23] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, p. 186.

[24] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, p. 271.

[25] Niklas Luhman, *The Differentiation of Society*, [New York, 1982], pp. 150-175.

[26] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, [New York: Panteon Books, 1980] pp. 38-39, 104-105.

[27] Foucault, *P/K*, p. 159.

[28] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, [New York: Vintage Books, 1979], p. 202.

[29] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*, [New York: Vintage Books, 1975], p. 28.

[30] Foucault, *D&P*, pp. 202-203.

[31] Foucault, *P/K*, pp. 152-153.

[32] Habermas, *TCA*, pp. 285-299.

[33] Habermas, *TCA*, Vol. 2, pp. 299-331.

[34] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, [New York: Vintage Books, 1980], p. 93.

[35] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, (Schocken Books, 1969), p. 222.

[36] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," p. 224.

[37] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," p. 223.

[38] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," p. 218.

[39] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (BBC and Penguin Books, 1972), pp. 32-33.

[40] Berger, *WOS*, pp. 142 & 149.

[41] Berger, *WOS*, p. 33.

[42] Reebee Garofalo, "Understanding Mega-Events: If We Are the World, Then How Do WE Change It?" in *Technoculture*, ed. Constance Penley and Andrew Ross, [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991].

[43] John Chesterman and Andy Lipman, *The Electronic Pirates*, [London: Routledge, 1988], p. 43.

[44] Constance Penley and Andrew Ross, "Introduction" in *Technoculture*, p. x.

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